

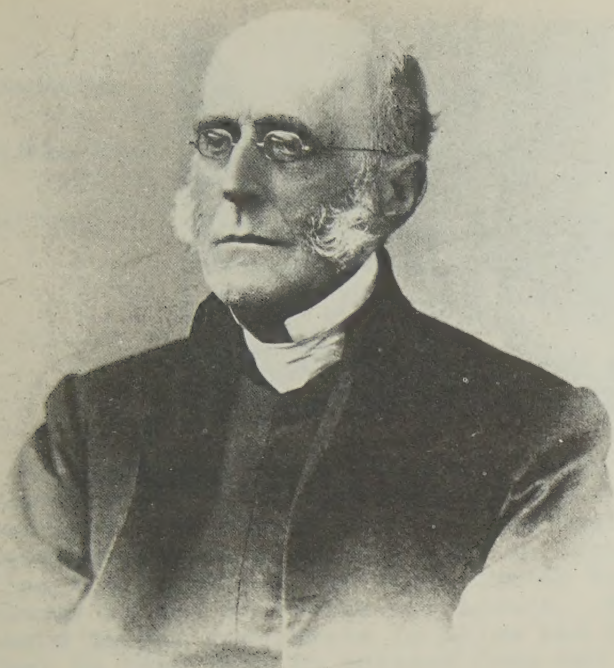
The Historiographer

of the Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut

Published quarterly by the Archivist and
Historiographer of the Diocese, P. O. Box
1080, Hartford 1. Subscription rate:
\$2.00 a year. Price of this issue: \$1.00.

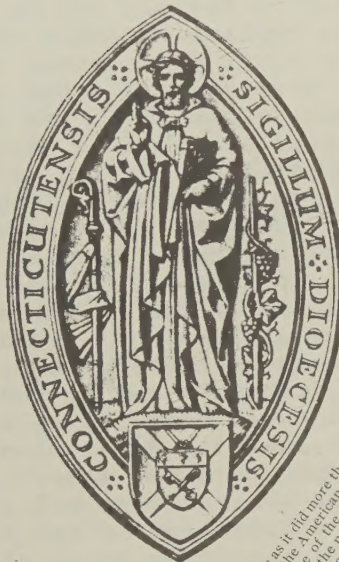
No. 14

December, 1955.

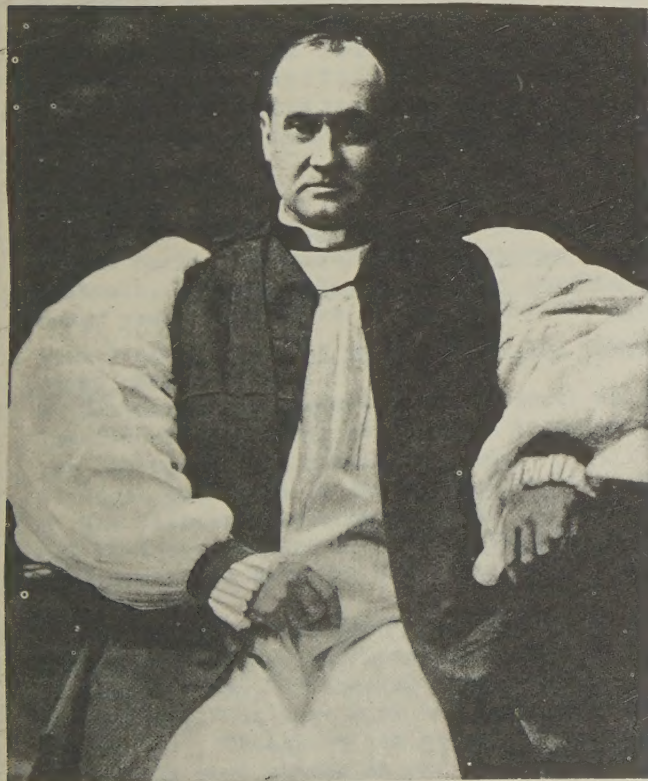


John Williams.

Fourth Bishop of Connecticut.
Consecrated St. John's Church, Hartford, October 29, 1851. Lived in Middletown.

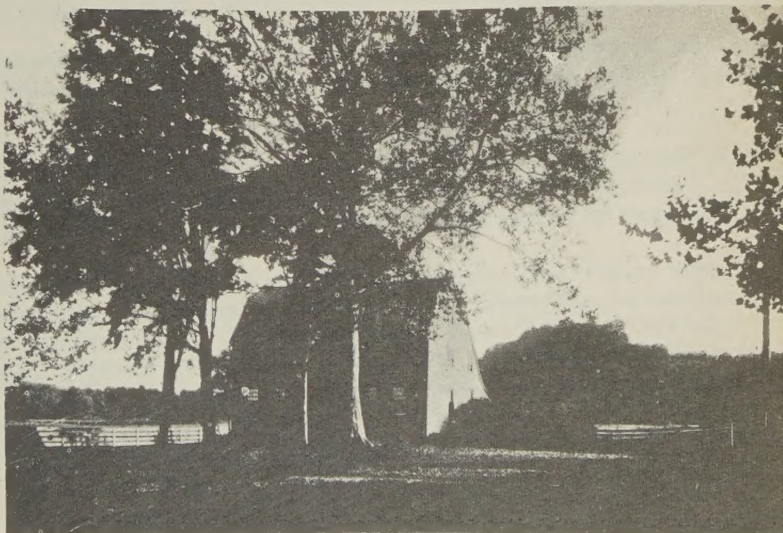


This house, which stands as it did more than an hundred years ago should be held sacred by every Churchman, for here it may be truly said the American Church had its birth as regards its complete organization. At the time of the Revolution it was the home of the Rev. John Kuiterters Marshall, a missionary of the Diocese of Connecticut. In March, 1845, at the coming of the new year, there assembled in "voluntary Convention" ten of the fourteen clergy then remaining in Connecticut, who had struggled bravely through the hardships of the war, ministering to their impoverished people. These "faithful and courageous men," (Dean Burton) after earnest deliberation, determined to send a candidate to England to seek consecration to the episcopate. The Rev. Samuel Seabury was finally selected, and, as is known, received consecration in Scotland and became the first bishop of the Church in the United States.



Chauncy B. Brewster

Fifth Bishop of Connecticut.
Consecrated in Trinity Church, New Haven, October 28, 1897.



OLD GLEBE HOUSE AT WOODBURY.
The Birthplace of the Church in America.

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Old Drawing
of Willey House
and Barn



GENESIS OF

HAWTHORNE'S

'THE AMBITIOUS GUEST'

By

KENNETH WALTER CAMERON

Under the year 1826 in the Archives of the 'Diocese of Connecticut'¹ are newspaper accounts of the White Mountain catastrophe which, a century and a quarter ago, for nearly twelve months provided New England clergy with vivid sermon illustrations of possible divine judgment, just as Captain Eddie Rickenbacker's remarkable deliverance from the perils of the ocean during World War II seemed to him and to hundreds of the clergy an act of divine providence. We have no evidence that Hawthorne regularly heard pulpit discourses in Salem and Boston during his post-college years, but we know that he read them in printed form and eagerly devoured stories in old news sheets.² Since, moreover, all important daily papers in New England, and most of the weeklies, including those circulated in his home,³ carried unusually full reports of the cloudburst and landslides at Crawford's Notch and of the efforts of rescuers and road repairers over a span of several months, we can, I think, assume that Hawthorne began contemplating the possibilities of the story, "The Ambitious Guest,"⁴ closer to September, 1826, than, as is currently believed, after September, 1832, when he made a visit--probably not his first--to the scene of the tragedy.⁵ In fact, the newspapers in their variations and hearsay reports significantly foreshadowed the unknown traveler of the later story, and, despite a predominant interest in horrible and sensational details,⁶ suggested some of the great themes which Hawthorne employed. He did not, as has been believed, hear a story from a few eyewitnesses and put it for the first time into print. Like Shakespeare in the use of Holinshed's Chronicles, Hawthorne here deliberately capitalized upon the public's large awareness of the "facts" in order to give to the stirring events a new and powerful focus and to universalize their significance. For a full appreciation of what his story sought to accomplish and of what it

1 See the "Chronological File," Diocesan Archives, Trinity College Library, Hartford.

2 See Marion L. Kesselring, Hawthorne's Reading: 1828-1850, N.Y., 1949, p. 36 et passim; also Robert Cantwell, Nathaniel Hawthorne: The American Years, N.Y., [1948], p. 118. For example, he read in these early years such works as Jeremy Taylor, Discourses on Various Subjects, (3 vols.), Boston, 1816; William Cobbett, Sermons on Hypocrisy and Cruelty etc., London, 1822; Henry Colman, Sermons on Various Subjects, Boston, 1820.

3 Hawthorne was graduated from Bowdoin on September 7, 1825, and seems to have spent most of the years immediately following at his home in Salem. Evidence is found in his surviving letters and in the charging records of the Salem Athenaeum.

4 First published in the New England Magazine, VIII, pp. 425-431 (June, 1835).

5 See Elizabeth Lathrop Chandler, "A Study of the Sources of the Tales and Romances Written by Nathaniel Hawthorne Before 1853," Smith College Studies in Modern Languages, VII, no. 4 (July, 1926), p. 57. That Hawthorne knew the White Mountains and the Notch during college days is suggested by Cantwell, op. cit., p. 84.

6 The public of the 1820's was avidly interested in the gothic and bizarre as the following typical newspaper headings will suggest: "Horrid Occurrence," "Melancholy Accident," "Horrible Assassination," "Infamous Fraud," "Singular Circumstance," "Diabolical Act," "Stranger Found Dead." An editorial, "To Our Readers," on page 2 of the Yeoman's Gazette, Concord, Mass., Nov. 17, 1827, comments on the prevailing taste: "Though we can select right good things, and by aid of scissors and lead make them typical of equally good things in our own vineyard, yet it is not in our power to manufacture such items out of our own pericranium. For example, we cannot manufacture shocking accidents, however agreeable it may be

meant to his contemporaries, therefore, we must first go to typical press reports, which both supplied a part of his donnée,⁷ associated him closely with the reading public, and helped him keep his achievement indigenous and realistic, in contrast to its weak counterpart, Longfellow's "Excelsior," published seven years later.⁸ The following clippings, preserving the original reports that were copied in hundreds of newspapers along the Atlantic Seaboard, will preface our consideration of Hawthorne's distinctive contribution to our literature.

I. EARLIEST NOTICES

[The Traveller, Boston, Friday morning, Aug. 25, 1826, p. 2:]

[Reprinted from Dover Gazette]

Great Freshet.----The heavens have been unusually propitious to us in these regions within the last fortnight. For several days and nights the rain descended without intermission, threatening us almost with another deluge.... The old folks were full of wise saws and curious prophesyings. Some good people of the town thought one Noah, an ancient of great respectability, had made his appearance among us.... The oldest inhabitants say there has not been the like in Dover these forty years. ---Dover Gazette.

[Yeoman's Gazette, Concord, Mass., Sept. 4, 1826:]

Melancholy----Since our paper went to press we have been verbally informed by a gentleman direct from the White Hills, that the family of Capt. Sam'l Willy, who resided at what is called the "Notch House" in Bartlett, consisting of 11 persons, were lost during the shower of rain on Monday night last. The house was found much injured by a "slide" from the mountain, and it is supposed the family were alarmed, and fled for safety, and were either buried in the earth by some "slide" or carried away by the waters, as not one of them have been heard of since. The clothes of the family were found in the house by their bed sides, and had they remained there they would have been preserved.

[Columbian Centinel, Boston, Wed., Sept. 6, 1826, p. 2, reprinted the preceding from Concord and added:]

We have conversed with a gentleman recently from the vicinity of the White Hills who mentions, that Mr. WILLY'S family consisted of nine persons;---that they resided between the two Crawfords;---that they were alarmed by the noise of an avelanche [sic] which destroyed the barn, fled from the house, and were overwhelmed by another avelanche.---The house was not destroyed. It was calculated that the rise of the river in Conway, &c. in consequence of the rain, was nearly as great as in 1820, when it rose 20 feet, and destroyed the bridges, &c. The produce on the intervale in Fryburg suffered considerable loss.

[Columbian Centinel, Boston, Sept. 9, 1826, p. 1:]

"DISTRESSING EVENT".


The following particulars of the effect of the late destructive avelanches from the White Mountains, in addition to those already given, are furnished by the Portland papers, and letters from the vicinity. The unfortunate family destroyed was composed of Mr. WILLY, his wife, five children, and two hired men. Mr. W. had recently removed thither from Fryeburg, and the family was highly respected for their amiable and affectionate manners, for their neatness, and obliging attentions to travellers. The children were very interesting. It is supposed to be about 11 o'clock at night, when the noise of the approaching avelanche so alarmed them as to compel them to leave their beds and fly from the house nearly naked, and they must have been overwhelmed soon after they left it. The bodies of Mr. and Mrs. W. and of one of the hired men, have been found at the distance of about 60 rods from the house, dreadfully mangled. The other bodies had not been discovered. The house was six miles distant from any other human habitation and the mountains on each side them nearly three thousand feet in height.---The house was found untouched; the rocks passing about 6 feet from it.---Two horses were killed in the barn, which was situated but a short distance from the house. The sufferings of the unfortunates can be better felt by sympathizing hearts than described.

The Saco river, which has its rise near the notch, was so swelled by the torrents as to overflow its banks, and occasion a great destruction in Bartlett and Conway, to the crops, mills, and bridges; and in Fryeburg, in which town the river winds its course a distance of nearly thirty miles, large quantities of

to record them after others have made them and however great the avidity of people to read them may be. We cannot, even for the sake of giving interest and variety to our paper, occasion destructive fires, yet we know our readers find these fires among the most attractive items in our columns.... Nay more, we cannot so much as induce our own annual Cattle Show to come round more than once in a year.... Nor have we ability to overturn stages, fight duels, blow up power magazines, multiply shipwrecks, musters, ... wars, earthquakes, tempests, revolutions, battles, ... murders, thefts, robberies, counterfeitings, capital trials, hangings, hurricanes, or unseasonable snow-storms...."

7 See Henry James, "The Art of Fiction," in Selected Fiction, ed. Leon Edel, N.Y. (Everyman's Lib.), 1953, p. 599.

8 See the note by Henry A. Pochmann and Gay Wilson Allen, Masters of American Literature, (2 vols.), N.Y., 1949, I, 636.



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corn, potatoes, meadow hay, and some cattle were swept away from the fine intervale lands so highly prized there. At Mr. Crawford's, eight miles from the notch, the water rose two feet in his house situated at some distance from the Saco, and his farm, so well known to travellers, was either destroyed or covered with rocks and rubbish. The obstructions to the road, which forms the only communication between those who reside on the East and West of these New England Alps, will require immense labor to remove. The road, we believe, is a turnpike, a considerable part of the shares of which are owned in this city....

[Yeoman's Gazette, Concord, Mass., Sat., Sept. 9, 1826, p. 3:] [From the Portland Advertiser, Sept. 5]

A gentleman of this town, who has recently returned from Conway, has favored us with some of the particulars of a disaster near the Notch of the White Hills which happened last week. The afternoon had been rainy, which continued until 11 o'clock in the evening, when it cleared away. About the same hour, a great noise was heard at the distance of several miles like the rushing down of rocks and much water from the mountains. The next morning the people at Conway could discern that some disaster of no ordinary character had happened by the appearance of the mountains each side of the road. On repairing to the spot, they found Mr. Willey's house standing near the notch unhurt, but destitute of any of the family. It was supposed they left it in their fright, and were instantly swept away, and buried under the rocks and earth which were borne down by the freshet. This family consisted of Mr. Willey, his wife, five children and two hired men, all of whom were suddenly swept from time to eternity by this lamentable disaster. Had they remained in the house, they probably would have been safe.---Three of those unfortunate persons have since been dug out from under the earth and rocks, which were carried along with them.

All the out buildings were destroyed and the horses in the stable. The oxen were saved. The road is filled up several miles to that degree that it is thought impracticable to make another. It is supposed that a water spout gathered and burst against the mountains, which produced so great a freshet instantaneously as to carry every thing before it. Rocks of several tons were swept away. The Saco river had risen at Fryeburg the next morning ten feet.

[Essex Register, Salem, Mass., Thurs., Sept. 7, 1826, p. 1, repeated the Concord news item of Sept. 4, after the following:]

White Mountains.---A report has been current for two or three days past of the destruction of a family at the notch of the White Mountains, by a fall of a part of the Mountain.

II. THE PRINCIPAL NARRATIVES

(A) [INFORMATION CONTAINED IN A LETTER FROM MR. GOSS, EDITOR OF THE NEW-HAMPSHIRE INTELLIGENCER, at Haverhill, N.H., sent to the editor of the Boston Courier. It appears in the Boston Courier, Sept. 9, 1826, p. 2; in the Boston Courier (Semi-Weekly), Sept. 11, 1826, p. 1; and in Yeoman's Gazette, Concord, Mass., Sat., Sept. 16, 1826, p. 3:] [Cf. Boston Commercial Gazette, Sept. 11, 1826, p. 4.]

A number of my neighbors started from this place on Friday morning last for the White Hills, for the purpose of beholding the work of devastation which the late slides or avalanches have made. It is, say they, impossible to describe what they have seen. To begin. You will picture to yourself from one to one hundred and fifty of these slides coming down from the top of the mountain, some fifty, some 100, and from fifty to eight hundred feet in width, and extending from three to five miles, carrying trees, huge stones, &c. with the velocity of lightning. Poor Mr. Willey and his family have met with a most melancholy fate. Had they but staid in their house, they would have been safe, as that, with a few feet of land in front, was the only place of refuge which was left them, yet they sought for a more safe one, and perished. One of these slides came down in the rear of Mr. W.'s house, within three feet, and there stopped, piled up about 100 feet high, with large logs, stones, trees, dirt, &c. Another stopped in front of the house, after taking the shed, barn, &c. in its way. In this slide it is supposed that Mr. Willey and family perished, as they were found about fifty rods from the house, among the timber of the barn. Mr. W. when found, had both of his legs and both arms broken, and was otherwise bruised. His wife was most horribly mangled--nearly half her head, from the forehead to the back part, was gone, literally torn off! and there she lay, naked, with her brains scattered around, a most hideous spectacle. The hired man was also much bruised. I am this evening informed that the entrails of one of the children have also been found. About 200 people are constantly employed in search of the bodies---It is however supposed that the bodies of the children were carried by the water into the river. The water rose in the river, about 16 miles from the Notch, 5 feet an hour, and was 25 feet higher than is usual. It is impossible to make or clear out the road again. Some of the stones that came from the mountain are as large as some two-story dwelling houses, and piled on top of each other for miles. It will take a man nearly a day to walk from Mr. E. A. Crawford's to the scene of desolation. If any person ever had a desire to see the White Mountains, they could now be well paid for their trouble. People are daily passing for that purpose.

Richard Bartlett, Sec'y. of State, and Mr. J[acob] B. Moore, were at Crawford's when this rain commenced, or rather they had started the Sunday afternoon previous for the Mountain, (Mount Washington) and had got as far as the Camp, where they staid all night. In the morning it began to rain in torrents, and the water ran through the Camp like a river. They barely escaped to Crawford's with their lives. The streams they had to cross in going back were so much swollen that they had to cut down trees to cross on--

and in crossing the Ammonoosuck they came very near being drowned; as the tree on which they crossed sank about 3 feet below the surface, and they had to sit astride, nearly under water, to hold on to keep themselves from going down with the current. They had not left the Camp many minutes before it was swept away by the current, and there are now gullies, where the Camp stood, from 10 to 20 feet deep.

(B) [NOTCH OF THE WHITE MOUNTAINS, or DISASTER AT THE WHITE HILLS. This news item originated in the New-Hampshire Intelligencer, Haverhill, N.H., but was reprinted in the Essex Register, Salem, Mass., Sept. 11, 1826, pp. 1-3, from which the following is copied. Reference here is made to "a girl residing with" Mr. Willey. From this account we learn something about an earlier landslide at the Notch on June 26, 1826, and the determination of the Willey family at that time to move.]

We have been informed by a company of gentlemen from New-York, on their return to this town, from an excursion to the White Mountains, that in consequence of the great fall of rain among these mountains last Monday, 28th ult. that there was one of the most tremendous scenes presented that has ever occurred in this country, connected with circumstances of calamity beyond the power of description. One of our informants, (the author of that beautiful little poem, the "Age of Benevolence,") and the same gentleman that preached a very interesting discourse in the South Parish Meeting-house, in this town, says, this scene beggars all description. In addition to all the bridges in the vicinity of the mountains, being swept away by the sudden and great rise of the streams, and which also ruined most of the fine meadow lands of Mr. Ethan Crawford, who lives four miles west of the Notch, by burying these meadows deep in sand and rocks, and trees; there was a tremendous slide of earth and rocks, &c. or as it is called in Switzerland where these occurrences are not unfrequent, Avalanche, which has so filled, or rather buried the Notch road, that it is doubted if it can ever be made passable again, or at least without great expense.---But what renders this occurrence the more awful is, that Mr. Willey, his wife, five children, two men and a girl residing with him, nine in number, are probably all buried beneath this mass. Mr. Willey's barn was destroyed, but his house was not injured, although within a few rods of the house [barn?]. The house, furniture, &c. &c. all appeared in the same order, as if the inmates of it had suddenly left it, leaving in the house many articles of clothing which they ordinarily wore.---Mr. Willey kept a comfortable little tavern, called the "Notch House," about six miles from the younger Mr. Crawford, about half way between that and the elder Mr. Crawford's. There was a slide or avalanche of earth and rocks on the mountain immediately south of Mr. Willey, about two months since, which passed on to, and destroyed a piece of the road within 15 or 20 rods of Mr. Willey's---This happened in the day-time, and greatly alarmed Mr. Willey and his family, so much so, that he began to make preparation for flight with his family; but the terror of the scene was of few minutes duration and all was still, before he was ready to depart. He and his family remained till that dark and awful night of the 28th of August, to meet a fate that chills the blood of the living to contemplate.

As not a soul of this family remains to relate any particulars of this heart-chilling event, the people in the vicinity (none however live within six miles) suppose, when they first heard this immense mass of matter, earth, trees, and rocks thundering down the steep sides of the mountain, that they attempted to make their escape, but the night being dark as Egyptian darkness, so that they could not see the direction or extent of the slide of the avalanche, were probably all buried alive under it.

The avalanche two months since, covered about an acre of ground with rocks of many tons weight, with earth and tress in a confused mass.

The late avalanche of 28th August, is said to have covered all the land Mr. Willey owned, fit for improvement, which consisted of 30 or 40 acres of meadow on the Saco river that passed near his house.

These are a few of the facts we have had from gentlemen lately returned from the mountains.

(C) [ADDITIONAL PARTICULARS BY COL. P. CARRIGAN, giving ages of the victims and a character estimate of Mr. and Mrs. Willey. They appeared in the Essex Register, Salem, Mass., Sept. 11, 1826, pp. 1-3, and in the Boston Daily American Statesman, Sat. morning, Sept. 9, 1826, p. 2. Summaries appeared in the Boston Courier, Sept. 9, 1826, p. 2, and in the Boston Courier (Semi-Weekly), Sept. 11, 1826, p. 1. Reference is made to the "Floom Brook" and to the Cave or "Camp" which Willey had prepared for emergencies.]

The distressing reports from the White Mountains which have for some days past excited so much fear and solicitude, are confirmed in their most melancholy details. ¶ The whole Willey family, with two hired men, making nine in number, perished by an avalanche, which slid from the west side of the Gap of the White Mountains, on the night of the 28th ult, viz.--

Samuel Willey, Jr. and his wife Polly, both aged about 30 years	Eliza Ann	13 years,	Elbridge Gerry	8 years.
	Jeremiah	12 years.	Sally	5 years.
	Martha	10 years.	David Allen, hired man	40 years.
			David Nicholson, do. do.	20 years.

Mr. Ethan A. Crawford, the Notch guide to Mount Washington, though extremely anxious for the fate of the Willey family, was detained at home, in consequence of the destruction of his own property on Tuesday, and did not get to the Notch House, until Wednesday morning. He found the barn adjoining, partly destroyed, and two horses killed in it; but the house was uninjured! although a slide had passed close below it, and another had miraculously stopped within three feet of the rear. ¶ Every appearance of the house indicated that the family had fled from it in the night, in the moment of alarm. Their clothes were on the floor nigh the beds where they had lain down for the last time to sleep. ¶ Mr. Crawford had, however, some

faint hopes that they might have escaped, and gone down to his father's, who keeps a public house six miles below. The arrival of his brother at the fatal spot, removed every shadow of a doubt on the subject. ¶ The next day, several hundreds of people assembled, and the bodies of Mr. and Mrs. Willey and Mr. Allen were found, about 50 rods from the house, in the meadow, amid drift wood, naked, bruised and disfigured. The body of Mr. Willey was found about 30 feet from those of Mrs. Willey and Mr. Allen. One of the hands of Allen was clenched round a small tree.---None of the other bodies had been found as late as the 3d inst. The searchers were directed to the spot where the bodies were found, partly by the flies, and the scent of two hounds. ¶ Mr Crawford, the father of Ethan A. says, that the rain fell in torrents, and heavier than was ever known in that part of the country, and ceased at his house (6 miles from Willey's about 11 o'clock at night.

The Willey family had probably after the rain had ceased, retired to rest; but awakened and alarmed by the crash of the barn, they rushed out of doors, and were flying for the Camp,* (which Mr Willey, after the slide of the 18th June last, had built as a place of refuge,) in the extreme darkness, they ran directly into one of the avalanches, and were swept into the flood below, to instant destruction. ¶ Mr Willey was a worthy man, and Mrs Willey an amiable and comely woman. They both were from respectable families in Conway, where they are to be re-interred.---This is the family of whom Mr. Buckingham, editor of the Galaxy, speaks so highly in his late tour to the White Mountains.

To those who know the Pass, it may be observed, that---As you descend the Notch, the first great slide is about 30 rods to the north of the famous cascade called the Floom Brook---from thence to 100 rods below the Willey House, are from 50 to 100, varying in width from 50 to 800 feet. The magnitude of the rocks thrown down, and whirled about, and the whole desolation, is horrible beyond description.

* This Camp was entirely destroyed, and in fact, the house, and a few feet of land in front of it, was the only spot where they could have been safe. Death was every where around them.

(D) [EXCERPTS FROM THE DIARY OF JOSEPH T. BUCKINGHAM, editor of the Boston Courier and of the New England Galaxy, both of Boston, Mass. The following was originally published in the Galaxy of Aug. 4, 1826, but it was reprinted by request in the Courier on Sat., Sept. 9, 1826. It was reprinted in large part by the New-Hampshire Journal, Concord, N.H., Sept. 11, 1826, p. 2, and by the Essex Register, Salem, Mass., Sept. 11, 1826, pp. 1-3 (see below). It describes the setting of the tragedy six weeks before it occurred. Reference is made to the earlier landslide and its effect on the Willey family.]

On the morning of [June] the 17th, from a public house kept in Conway, N. H. by Mr. M'Millan, we pursued our journey to the White Mountains, in an open wagon, with one companion beside the driver. By travelling in this open vehicle, a much better view was obtained of the rude and romantic scenery than if we had taken the stage-coach. The road follows, generally, the windings of Saco river to its source above the Notch, and crosses it several times. Through the town of Conway, and for several miles above, in Bartlett, and an unincorporated tract, called Hart's Location, there are considerable intervalles on the banks of the river; but as the road ascends, the mountains on either side gradually approximate nearer to each other, till there is barely space enough for a road. About 12 miles above M'Millan's is a tavern, kept by Obed Hall, better known in these regions as Judge Hall, a gentleman who was once a representative in Congress. Six or seven miles above Judge Hall's, the traveller reaches the house of Mr. Crawford, senior. We stopped here but just long enough to give our horses water, and a few breathing moments. The vale between the mountains is here extremely narrow, and the Saco, being above the confluence of any considerable tributary, is a mere brook.

After leaving the cultivated grounds of Mr. Crawford, contiguous to his house, the road and the river wind through a deep and narrow glen, six miles, before another human habitation is discerned; and, except the road, there is scarcely an indication in all this distance, that the physical power of a human being has ever been exercised. At the conclusion of this six miles, the eye is greeted with the appearance of a small but comfortable dwelling house, owned and occupied by a Mr. Willey, who has taken advantage of a small, a very small intervalle,--where the bases of the two mountains seemed to have paused and receded, as if afraid of coming in contact and amalgamating into one impassable pile,--to erect his lone habitation. Rude and uninviting as the spot appears, he has contrived to gather around it the necessaries, if not the conveniences of life. We observed a large flock of sheep in one of his enclosures; other domestic animals in the barn-yard and several flocks of ducks and geese in the little meadow which fronted the house. We were furnished with a dinner of ham, eggs, and the usual accompaniments to such a meal in a country tavern. The interior of the house exhibited a neatness that might well become some inns that we have seen of more frequent resort, and the faces of parents and children were the pictures of content. Can philosophy or conjecture account for or explain the motives that can induce a man thus to plant himself at a distance of six miles from the habitation of any of his race, and and [sic] in a spot where it is next to impossible he can ever have a nearer neighbor?

From hence to the Notch of the White Mountains the distance is about two miles. The sublime and awful grandeur of this passage baffles all description. Geometry may settle the heights of the mountains, and numerical figures may record the measure, but no words can tell the emotions of the soul, as it looks upward and views the almost perpendicular precipices which line the narrow space between them; while the senses ache with terror and astonishment, as one sees himself hedged in from all the world besides. He may cast his eye forward or backward or to either side--he can see only upward, and there the diminutive circle of his vision is cribbed and confined by the battlements of Nature's cloud-capt towers, which seem

as if they wanted only the breathing of a zephyr or the wafting of a straw against them, to displace them, and crush the prisoner in their fall. Just before our visit to this place,--on the 28th of June,--there was a tremendous avalanche, or slide, as it is there called, from the mountain which makes the southern wall of the passage. An immense mass of earth and rock from the side of the mountain was loosened from its resting place and began to slide towards the bottom. In its course it divided into three portions, each coming down with amazing velocity into the road, and sweeping before it shrubs, trees and rocks, and filling up the road beyond all possibility of its being recovered. With great labor, a pathway has been made over those fallen masses, which admits the passage of a carriage. The place from which this slide or slip was loosened, is directly in the rear of Mr. Willey's house; and were there not a special Providence in the fall of a sparrow, and had not the finger of that Providence traced the direction of the sliding mass, neither he, nor any soul of his family, would ever have told the tale. They heard the noise when it first began to move, and ran to the door. In terror and amazement, they beheld the mountain in motion. But what can human power effect in such an emergency? Before they could think of retreating, or ascertain which way to escape, the danger was past. One portion of the avalanche crossed the road about ten rods only from their habitation. The second a few rods beyond that; and the third and much the largest portion took a still more oblique direction. The whole area now covered by this slide, Mr. Willey estimates to be nearly an acre, and the distance of its present bed from its former place on the side of the mountain, and which it moved over in a few minutes, he thinks is from three quarters of a mile to a mile. There are many trees of large size, that came down with such force as to shiver them in pieces; and innumerable rocks of many tons weight; any one of which was sufficient to carry with it destruction to any of the labors of man. The spot on the mountain, from which the slip was loosened is now a naked white rock; and its pathway downward is indicated by deep channels or furrows grooved in the side of the mountain, and down one of which poured a stream of water sufficient to carry a common saw-mill.

From this place to the Notch, there is almost a continual ascent, generally gradual, but sometimes steep and sudden. The narrow path-way proceeds along the stream, sometimes crossing it and shifting from the side of one mountain to the other as either furnishes a less precarious foot-hold for the traveller than its fellow. Occasionally it winds up the side of the steep to such a height as to leave on one hand or the other, a gulf of unseen depth; for the foliage of the trees and shrubs is impervious to the sight. The Notch itself is formed by a sudden projection of rock from the mountain on the right or northerly side, rising perpendicularly to a great height, (probably 70 or 80 feet) and by a large mass of rock on the left side, which has tumbled from its ancient location, and taken a position within twenty feet of its opposite neighbor. The length of this Notch is not more than three or four rods. The moment it is passed, the mountains seem to have vanished. A level meadow overgrown with long grass and wild flowers, and spotted with tufts of shrubbery, spreads itself before the astonished eye, on the left; and a swamp or thicket on the right conceals the ridge of mountains which extend to the north. The road separates this thicket from the meadow. Not far from the Notch, on the right hand side of the road, several springs issue from the rocks that form the base of the mountain, unite in the thicket, and form the Saco river. This little stream runs across the road into the meadow, where it almost loses itself in its meandering among the bogs; but again collects its waters and passes under the rock that makes the southerly wall of the Notch. It is here invisible for several rods, and its presence is only indicated by its noise as it rolls through its rugged tunnel. In wet seasons and freshets, probably a portion of the water passes over the fragments of rocks which are here wedged together, and form an arch or covering for the natural bed of the stream.

The sensations which affect the corporeal faculties, as one views these stupendous creations of Omnipotence, are absolutely afflicting and painful. If you look at the summits of the mountains, when a cloud passes towards them, it is impossible for the eye to distinguish at such a height, which is in motion, the mountain or the cloud, and this deception of vision produces a dizziness, which few spectators have nerve enough to endure for many minutes. If the eye be fixed on the crags and masses of rock that project from the sides of the mountains, the flesh involuntarily quivers, and the limbs seem to be impelled to retreat from a scene that threatens impendent destruction. If the thoughts which crowd upon the intellectual faculties are less painful than these sensations of flesh and blood, they are too sublime to be described. The frequent alterations and the great changes that have manifestly taken place in these majestic masses since they were first piled together by the hand of the Creator, are calculated to awaken "thoughts beyond the reaches of the soul." If the "everlasting hills" thus break in pieces and shake the shaggy covering from their sides, who will deny that

This earthly globe, the creature of a day,
Though built by God's right hand, shall pass away;
The Sun himself, by gathering clouds oppress,
Shall, in his silent, dark pavilion, rest;
His golden urn shall break, and useless lie
Amongst the common ruins of the sky--
The stars rush headlong in the wild commotion,
And bathe their glittering foreheads in the ocean.
-----God performs upon the trembling stage
Of his own works his dreadful part alone.
Earth quakes at his approach; her hollow womb,
Conceiving thunders through a thousand deep
And fiery caverns, roars beneath his foot.

The hills move lightly, and the mountains smoke,
For he has touched them.
The rocks fall headlong and the valleys rise.
What solid was, by transformation strange,
Grows fluid; and the fixed and rooted earth,
Tormented into billows, heaves and swells,
Or, with vertiginous and hideous whirl
Sucks down its prey insatiable. Immense
The tumult, and the overthrow, the pangs
And agonies of human and of brute
Multitudes, fugitive on every side,
And fugitive in vain.

Reflection needs not the authority of inspiration to warrant a belief that this delineation is something more than poetical. History and Philosophy teach its truth, or, at least, its probability. The melancholy imaginings which it excites are relieved by the conviction that the whole of God's creation is nothing less

Than a capacious reservoir of means,
Formed for his use and ready at his will;

and that if this globe should be resolved into chaos, it will undergo a new organization, and be remoulded into scenes of beauty and abodes of happiness. Such may be the order of nature to be unfolded in a perpetual series of material production and decay, of creation and dissolution--a magnificent procession of worlds and systems--in the march of eternity.

After passing by the meadow mentioned above, the road proceeds through a forest of evergreens, maples, mountain-ash, &c. four miles to the house of Mr. Crawford, jun. This is the resort of all visitors to Mount Washington, and is the only human habitation, after leaving Mr. Willey's, already mentioned, for the space of twelve miles. Here we remained several days, from Monday afternoon to Friday morning. When we arrived, the summit of Mount Washington was enveloped in thick clouds, and did not show itself till Wednesday, although the horizon in every other direction was clear. The summit of this mountain is nine miles from Crawford's. One mile of this distance is on the road to the Notch, which is thus far retraced, by those who visit the mountain. The path then leaves the road and crosses a pasture. It then enters a wilderness, in some places overgrown with high grass and raspberry bushes, and incumbered with stumps and half-burnt logs and trees; in others, where it has not been overrun by fire, the trees are large, excluding entirely the rays of the sun, and there is little or no under-brush to incommode the pedestrian. After travelling more than six miles, with Mr. Crawford for a guide, and crossing one branch of the Amonoc-suck river on a log, and another branch several times by stepping from stone to stone, we reached The Camp. This is a hut made of bark, erected by Mr. Crawford for a resting place, and furnished with a bed of the small twigs of the fir, which is very grateful to the limbs of one who has walked thither from his house; and no other mode of approach is practicable. He keeps here a few blankets, the materials for kindling a fire, and the necessary vessels for making tea. The course usually adopted by visitors, is, to leave his house in the afternoon, pass the night at the Camp, and complete the excursion the next day. Circumstances rendered it necessary for us to perform the whole in one day. We started at six from Mr. Crawford's house, and arrived at the Camp about half past eight, A.M. After half an hour's rest and refreshment, we proceeded in the ascent, which is exceedingly fatiguing. The ascent after leaving the Camp is steep, and not acquired without great exertion. In many places the roots of trees which cross the path, form a kind of stair, which assists the progress. A mile or more below the summit, the region of vegetation ceases; or if any thing grows above this boundary, it is the Dwarf-willow, not more than three inches in height, and a few stunted [*sic*] spruces, that spring from the rocks like excrescences. The appearance of these trees, if trees they may be called, is truly dwarfish. The bodies of some of them are quite large, perhaps eight, ten, or twelve inches in circumference, none of them more than two feet high, and all of them dead at the top--the spire of the trunk rising a few inches above the living branches, but perfectly dead and dry.

The prospect from the top of Mount Washington is grand and extensive. In a clear day, the eye takes in a circuit of at least one hundred miles. When we were there, the atmosphere was smoky and the prospect much circumscribed. Little else could be distinguished than the peaks of other mountains, which resembled islands rising from the sea. The thickness of the air obscured all other objects. A mile below the summit, the house and barns of Mr. Crawford were visible, and appeared shrunk to the diminutive size of a two-bushel basket. Descending by the path we ascended, we reached Crawford's about five o'clock, having been absent eleven hours.

Mr. Crawford intends to make a carriage road from his house to the Camp, which will greatly lessen the fatigue of ascending the mountain. To assist him in this project, a subscription is opened in a book kept at his house, and about \$200 subscribed. When this road is completed which will be in the course of another summer, we know not why the Notch and Mount Washington should not be attractive to those who travel for amusement, or health. To the lovers of the wild and wonderful operations of Nature, these scenes furnish unspeakable gratification; and if he is a son of New-England, they will not be the less admirable because they are a portion of his native woods and mountains. New-England--

There is no other land like thee,
No dearer shore;
Thou art the shelter of the free;
The home, the port of Liberty,
Thou hast been, and shalt ever be,
Till Time is o'er.

Ere I forget to think upon
My native land, shall mother curse the son
She bore.

Thou art the firm unshaken rock,
On which we rest;

And, rising from thy hardy stock,
Thy sons the tyrant's frown shall mock,
And Slavery's galling chains unlock,
And free the oppressed;
All, who the wreath of Freedom twine,
Beneath the shadow of thy vine
Are blessed.

We love thy rude and rocky shore,
And here we stand--
To die for home---leaning on heaven
Our hand.

(E) [DESTRUCTIVE STORM AT THE WHITE MOUNTAINS, by Jacob B. Moore, editor of the New-Hampshire Journal. This article gives much about the Willey family, something about the laborers, the exact ages of all, the names of survivors, references to a traveller named Barker, and a conversation with Mrs. Willey by Buckingham.]

THE JOURNAL.

CONCORD, SEPTEMBER 11, 1826.

EDITED BY JACOB B. MOORE.

☞ The first number of the NEW-HAMPSHIRE JOURNAL is here presented to our readers; and we hope its appearance may not disappoint the expectations of the numerous friends, who have bestowed upon us their confidence in advance.

DESTRUCTIVE STORM AT THE WHITE MOUNTAINS.

"Slowly it came in its mountain wrath,
"And the forests vanished before its path;
"The rude cliffs bowed—and the waters fled—
"And the living were buried, while over their head
"They heard the full march of their fate as it sped—
"And the valley of life was the tomb of the dead."

On Monday the 28th of August, at the White Mountains, occurred one of the most remarkable floods of rain ever known in that region, and attended with circumstances of calamity perhaps unequaled in this state. Slight showers had been frequent for several days previous, and the wind continuing southeasterly, thick clouds wrapped themselves about the summits of the mountains, completely hiding them from the view. In company with several gentlemen, who were on an excursion to these mountains, we happened to arrive on the evening previous at the *Camp*, a shelter erected of bark by Mr. Crawford, for the accommodation of visitors, who usually pass the night there, in order to avail themselves of the fine views presented from the mountain at sunrise. This *Camp* is situated 6 3-4 miles N. E. of Crawford's house, at an elevation of about 2800 feet above the sea, and within 2 1-4 miles of the summit of Mount Washington. Our path lay through a wilderness, in some places overgrown with high grass and bushes, in others incumbered with fallen trees and underbrush—now opening upon a desolate spot where fires had passed along, and suddenly entering the deep forest, whose intermingling foliage shuts out the light of heaven. Night coming upon us very soon after we left his house, our guide (Mr. Crawford,) struck up a light, and we chased each other in Indian file over a path, sometimes rendered as luminous as day by the addition of torches, and at others but dimly seen by our nearly extinguished lights. The miles were accurately announced by our leader as he passed along, and we were in fit mood for repose, when, at a little after 10 o'clock in the evening, we reached the *Camp*. At this hour a quiet starlight reigned above us, and taking each a blanket, we laid down upon a bed of twigs, and, listening to the music of a small stream which poured down at our right, fell into a refreshing sleep.

At three o'clock in the morning, fearful indications of rain were discovered; the thick and moist clouds collected about the mountains, and high winds swept in every direction

through the deep valleys. About 5 o'clock the rain commenced, occasionally pouring down in torrents as the winds altered the course of the clouds, but generally falling moderately until afternoon, when its violence rapidly increased. Climbing up on a gnarled oak a few rods from the *Camp*, during a temporary suspension of the rain, we could see towards the summit of the mountain, the tree and shrubbery bending in every direction, and above them the bare rocks smoking, as it were from the violence of the storm. To us the very summit seemed to shake in the tempest and an involuntary dread touched our hearts as the noise of the storm increased, and the sudden gusts swept over our heads, dashing down streams of water upon us.

Finding it impossible to keep our fires—the rain still continuing to increase—and fearing that either the violent winds or the rain might deprive us of our frail shelter,—at half past o'clock, P. M. we left the *Camp*, and after great exertion, in fording rapid streams, seeking new paths to avoid the deep waters collected in many places before us, and crossing the swollen and roaring branches of the *Ammonoosuck*—several of which had risen, in four hours, 6 or 8 feet—we reached Crawford's a little before 9 in the evening, in the midst of the most dreadful rain-storm we ever witnessed. The very earth seemed to shake under our feet, as the winds drove down from the mountains through the valley—mingling their roar with that of the river, which now tumbled along in white foam like a tremendous cataract.

Early on Tuesday morning, after the rain had ceased, the whole of the beautiful meadow in front of the house was flooded, the water extending up to the very steps of the dwelling.

Thousands of trunks, branches, and roots of trees, passed along the current, covering, in some directions, whole acres; and wherever any thing impeded their progress, forming strong and high dams, until the rapid gathering of the mass behind drove through all obstructions. Deep excavations in the earth, large masses of stones, gravel and sand thrown up—broken trunks and fragments of trees, &c. were presented to the eye in every direction, as the waters subsided; and their fall was almost as rapid as the rise.

The farm of *Elihu A. Crawford* was very materially injured—his crops nearly all destroyed—fourteen of his flock of sheep drowned—and a shed 90 feet in length carried away in the flood. The water rose 3 or 4 feet higher at this place, than was ever before known—and the whole surface of the earth, over which the floods came, seemed to have undergone a transformation.

Defeated in our attempt to ascend the mountains, we waited until the bridges near Crawford's were repaired, and passed over

Pondicherry mountain and the Jefferson turnpike, to Lancaster. The beautiful farm of Mr. Woodward, (once the residence of Col. Whipple,) in Jefferson, had been flooded by Israel's river, which here was extremely muddy, as was the case with all the streams passing from the mountains. The rains were less violent to the westward, though most of the rivers had been swollen. At this place we learnt that immense quantities of earth, stone and trees had slipped down from the sides of the mountains in Randolph, changing in several places the course of Israel's river, and destroying some fine tracts of interval. Here also, we were informed of the dreadful occurrences at the Notch of the Mountains, and that we ourselves were by no means unfortunate in leaving the *Camp*, which was overwhelmed the very night we abandoned it! Anxious to ascertain more particularly the ravages of that fatal night, we returned to Crawford's on Friday, and having staid at the *Notch House* during the night, and examined the ruins about that dismal place, found that the utmost stretch of fancy could hardly paint a scene more awful than the reality before us.

The Notch of the White Mountains is a narrow glen, extending two miles in length between two huge cliffs, apparently rent asunder by some vast convulsion—probably that of the deluge. The entrance of the chasm is formed by two rocks standing perpendicular at the distance of 22 feet asunder. The length of this narrow pass may be three or four rods—beyond which, as you pass down, the cliffs seem to have receded, increasing in height and forming at their base little tracts of rich meadow land, through which meandered the *Saco*. About half a mile from the entrance of the Notch, is seen the beautiful waterfall, called by Dwight the *Silver Cascade*—issuing from the mountain on the left, and passing over a series of rocks almost perpendicularly 800 feet. A short distance below, from the left, falls another clear and beautiful stream, called the *Flume*; and at the distance of about a mile below this, on a small interval, is situated the comfortable dwelling, lately inhabited by the unfortunate family destroyed.

The road from Crawford's down to the Notch House is a perfect ruin—the bridges being all torn up, deep gullies and new streams formed along the path, and masses of rocks of great size thrown together, apparently by the waters—which in some places along the road rose to the height of 20 or 25 feet. On entering the Notch, a scene is presented which it is impossible accurately to describe. Enormous masses of granite, over which the road in the pass was formed, are torn from their foundations, some of which are removed many rods down, and others formed barriers across the path, over which a tremendous cataract seems to have flowed, cutting deep basins out of the substantial flooring beneath, until the raging

and confined torrent, bursting its prison, swept every thing before it. From the sides of the notch, the loose crags have fallen, and many a stately tree which long waved above the gulf, came down with the soil upon which it grew. The two beautiful streams so often noticed by travellers, appear to have been swollen to the size of rivers, and to have poured down the rocky steep with overwhelming power. About 80 rods beyond commenced the terrible slides or avalanches, (as they are termed in Switzerland) which are seen along the whole gulf, as far as the eye can reach, and indeed upon the sides of the distant mountains.

The house inhabited by Capt. Willey and his family stood on the westerly side of the road, and a few rods distant from the high bluff which rises with fearful rapidity to the height of 2000 feet. Adjoining was a barn and woodhouse—in front, was a beautiful little meadow covered with crops—and the Saco passed along at the foot of the easterly precipice. Nearly in range of the house, a slide from the extreme point of the westerly hill came down in a deep and horrible mass to within about five rods of the dwelling, where its course appears to have been checked by a large block of granite, which, falling on a flat surface, backed the rolling mass for a moment, until it separated into two streams—one of which rushed down by the north end of the house, crushing the barn, and spreading itself over the meadow—the other passing down on the south side, and swallowing up the unfortunate beings, who probably attempted to fly to a

shelter, which it is said had been erected a few rods distant. This shelter, whatever it might have been, was completely overwhelmed, rocks weighing 50 to 100 tons being scattered about the place, and indeed in every direction—rendering escape utterly impossible. The house remains untouched, though large stones and trunks of trees made fearful approaches to its walls, and the moving mass, which separated behind the building, again united in its front! The house alone could have been their refuge from the horrible uproar around—the only spot untouched by the crumbling and consuming power of the storm.

A traveller of the name of Barker, from Effingham, who had been to the north, passed down the notch road on Wednesday.—Arriving at the house at dark, he found the doors all open, the coverings of the beds thrown off, and the wearing apparel of the family lying about the floor. Their fate he knew not, but could hardly doubt; and as soon as morning enabled him to proceed, he went to the senior Mr Crawford's, six miles below the Notch House, and inquired for the absent family. No one had seen them. Immediate search was made, and during the day the bodies of Mr. and Mrs. Willey, and a Mr. Allen were discovered at some distance from the

house, partly buried in the earth and covered with limbs and trunks of trees.

The family consisted of nine persons, the names and ages of whom were given us by a relative of Mrs. W., as follow :

Samuel Willey, jun.	aged 38,	
Polly Willey,	" 35,	
Eliza-Ann,	" 13,	
Jeremiah,	" 11,	
Martha G.	" 9,	} children.
Elbridge G.	" 7,	
Sally,	" 5,	

David Nickerson,	" 21,	} laborers.
David Allen,	" 37,	

Mr. Willey was a man of respectable connexions, and of excellent character. A brother, and we believe his father, represented the town of Conway in our legislature, and another brother (Rev B. G. Willey) is the present minister of that town.* The deceased was in comfortable circumstances of life—had a neat farm in the town of Bartlett, which he rented,

and where he was once obliged to remove his dwelling in consequence of the rise of the Saco. By the persuasion of some of his friends, he was induced to purchase the little estate at the Notch, and about a year since removed thither, where he continued to minister to the wants of the traveller until the day of his untimely end.

Allen and Nickerson were laborers in the employ of Mr. Willey, the former of whom left four orphan children, penniless, to the charities of the world. Both were from Bartlett.

Great numbers visited the scene of destruction during the days following the discovery of the three bodies, searching for the remainder; and we have just learnt that those of the oldest and youngest child have been since found.

[This article is followed by two others on page 3 of the New-Hampshire Journal: (a) "Losses by the Late Storm" and (b) "Nancy's Hill." See below for the second one and for its significance. The conversation with Mrs. Willey, at the bottom of this page, appeared also in the Boston Courier, Sept. 6, 1826, p. 2, and in the Essex Register, Salem, Mass., Sept. 7.]

We [Joseph T. Buckingham] have seldom seen a more interesting family. There were several children, the eldest of which was a boy eight or nine years old. All appeared remarkably intelligent, well-behaved, contented, and happy. The mother was their instructor, as mothers should always be. To our inquiry whether she was not terrified when the slip came down, she replied, Yes---and had caught two of her children in her arms to escape down the valley; but she soon perceived by the direction it took, that it would not touch their house. She added that she did not feel that there was any more danger of their being buried alive by these slides than there was of the strangers who passed through the Notch suffering the same fate; and expressed a perfect reliance on the protection of Providence, and an acquiescence in whatever they might be ordained to bear. Virtuous and interesting woman! if the fate we fear has overtaken thee and thy innocent babes, we cannot doubt that Providence sustained thee in the last horrible moment, which nature shuddered to anticipate, and has granted the fruition of thy hopes, a seat with thy loved little ones; on those celestial mountains not subject to "the wreck of matter, or the crush of worlds."

*The intelligent editor of the N. E. Galaxy, who passed through the Notch in July, a short time after the former slide, and spent some time at Mr. Willey's, thus notices the family: "We have seldom seen a more interesting family. There were several children. All appeared remarkably intelligent, well behaved, contented, and happy. The mother was their instructor, as mothers should always be. To our inquiry whether she was not terrified when the slip came down, she replied Yes---and had caught two of her children in her arms to escape down the valley; but she soon perceived by the direction it took, that it would not touch their house. She added that she did not feel that

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(F) [LONG LETTER FROM THE REV. CARLOS WILCOX, dated Hanover, N.H., 2d Sept. 1826, to the Columbian Centinel, Boston, Mass., in which it was apparently first published on Sept. 9, 1826, p. 2. It was slightly condensed in the Essex Register, Salem, Mass., Sept. 11, 1826, pp. 1-3, and in the Boston Weekly Messenger, Thurs., Sept. 14, 1826, p. 3, and in the New-Hampshire Gazette, Portsmouth, N.H., Tuesday, Sept. 19, 1826, p. 1. (The following text is drawn from the original in the Columbian Centinel:)]

NOTICE.
Purchasers of Broadcloths
will find chances of great
bargains, by calling at
WM. HATHORNE'S
Sept. 4. STORE.

DEAR SIR--I have just returned from an excursion to the White Mountains, and shall now spend a day of rest in this village, in giving you some account of the effects produced by the most destructive fall of rain ever known in that region. It happened on the night of the 28th of August, which will be long remembered in this part of the country.

I left Hanover on Saturday last, in company with two gentlemen of my acquaintance from the city of New-York, and rode as far as Haverhill, where we all spent the Sabbath. The road over which we passed was like a bed of ashes two or three inches deep; and the country around us exhibited the usual effects of a long drought. The abundant rains, that fell three weeks ago, over the Southern half of New-England, did not reach the upper part of the valley of Connecticut River. On Monday morning it began to rain at Haverhill, and continued along our route for most of the day, but so moderately and at such intervals, that with the help of great coats and umbrellas we proceeded on our journey in an open wagon as far as Bethlehem, fifteen miles West of the White Mountains. As we approached the vicinity of the Mountains, the rain increased till it became a storm, and compelled us to stop about the middle of the afternoon.

The storm continued most of the night; but the next morning was clear and serene. The view from the hill of Bethlehem was extensive and delightful. In the Eastern horizon Mount Washington, with the neighboring peaks on the North and on the South, formed a grand outline far up in the blue sky. Two or three small fleecy clouds rested on its side, a little below its summit, while from behind this highest point of land in the United States East of the Mississippi, the sun rolled up rejoicing in his strength and glory. We started off toward the object of our journey, with spirits greatly exhilarated [*sic*] by the beauty and grandeur of our prospect. As we hastened forward with our eyes fixed on the tops of the Mountains before us, little did we think of the scene of destruction around their base, on which the sun was now for the first time beginning to shine. In about half an hour we entered Breton Woods, an unincorporated tract of land covered with a primitive forest, extending on our road five miles to Rosebrook's Inn, and thence six miles to Crawford's, the establishment begun by Rosebrook's father, as described in the Travels of Dr. DWIGHT. On entering this wilderness we were struck with its universal stillness.---From every leaf in its immense masses of foliage the rain hung in large glittering drops; and the silver note of a single unseen and unknown bird was the only sound that we could hear. After we had proceeded a mile or two the roaring of the Amonosuck began to break in upon the stillness, and soon grew so loud as to excite our surprise. In consequence of coming to the river almost at right angles, and by a very narrow road, through trees and bushes very thick, we had no view of the water, till with a quick trot we had advanced upon the bridge too far to recede, when the sight that opened at once to the right hand and to the left, drew from all of us similar exclamations of astonishment and terror; and we hurried over the trembling fabric as fast as possible. After finding ourselves safe on the other side, we walked down to the brink; and, though familiar with mountain scenery, we all confessed that we had never seen a mountain torrent before. The water was as thick with earth as it could be, without being changed into mud. A man living near in a log hut showed us how high it was at day break. Though it had fallen six feet, he assured us that it was still ten feet above its ordinary level. To this add its ordinary depth of three or four feet, and here at day break was a body of water twenty feet deep, and sixty feet wide, moving with the rapidity of a gale of wind between steep banks covered with hemlocks and pines, and over a bed of large rocks, breaking its surface into billows like those of the ocean. After gazing a few moments on this sublime sight, we proceeded on our way, for the most part at some distance from the river, till we came to the farm of Rosebrook, lying on its banks. We found his fields covered with water, and sand, and flood wood. His fences and bridges were all swept away; and the road was so blocked up with logs, that we had to wait for the labors of men and oxen, before we could get to his house. Here we were told that the river was never before known to bring down any considerable quantity of earth, and were pointed to bare spots on the sides of the White Mountains, never seen till that morning. As our road, for the remaining six miles, lay quite near the river and crossed many small tributary streams, we employed a man to accompany us with an axe. We were frequently obliged to remove trees from the road, to fill excavations, to mend and make bridges, or contrive to get our horses and wagon along separately. After toiling in this manner for half a day, we reached the end of our journey, not however without being obliged to leave our wagon half a mile behind. In many places, in these six miles, the road and the whole

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SALEM, (MASS.) MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 1826.

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adjacent woods, as it appeared from the marks on the trees, had been overflowed to the depth of ten feet. In one place the river, in consequence of some obstruction at a remarkable fall, had been twenty feet higher than it was when we passed. We stopped to view the fall, which Dr. DWIGHT calls "beautiful." He says of it---"The descent is from fifty to sixty feet, cut through a mass of stratified granite; the sides of which appear as if they had been laid by a mason in a variety of fantastical forms; betraying, however, by their rude and wild aspect, the masterly hand of nature." This description is sufficiently correct; but the beauty of the fall was now lost in its sublimity. You have only to imagine the whole body of the Amonosuck, as it appeared at the bridge which we crossed, now compressed to half of its width, and sent downward at an angle of 20 or 25 degrees, between perpendicular walls of stone. On our arrival at Crawford's the appearance of his farm was like that of Rosebrook's, only much worse. Some of his sheep and cattle were lost; and eight hundred bushels of oats were destroyed. Here we found five gentlemen, who gave us an interesting account of their unsuccessful attempt to ascent Mount Washington the preceding day. They went to the "Camp" at the foot of the mountain on Sabbath evening, and lodged there with the intention of climbing the summit the next morning. But in the morning the mountains were enveloped in thick clouds; the rain began to fall, and increased till afternoon, when it came down in torrents. At five o'clock they proposed to spend another night at the camp, and let their guide return home for a fresh supply of provisions for the next day. But the impossibility of keeping a fire where every thing was so wet, and at length the advice of their guide, made them all conclude to return, though with great reluctance. No time was now to be lost, for they had seven miles to travel on foot, and six of them by a rugged path through a gloomy forest. They ran as fast as their circumstances would permit; but the dark evergreens around them, and the black clouds above, made it night before they had gone half of the way. The rain poured down faster every moment; and the little streams, which they had stepped across the evening before, must now be crossed by wading, or by cutting down trees for bridges, to which they were obliged to cling for life. In this way they reached the bridge over the Amonosuck near Crawford's just in time to pass it before it was carried down the current. On Wednesday, the weather being clear and beautiful, and the waters having subsided, six gentlemen, with a guide, went to Mount Washington, and one accompanied Mr. Crawford to the "Notch," from which nothing had yet been heard. We met again at evening, and related to each other what we had seen. The party who went to the Mountain were five hours in reaching the site of the camp, instead of three, the usual time. The path for nearly one-third of the distance was so much excavated, or covered with miry sand, or blocked up with flood wood, that they were obliged to grope their way through thickets almost impenetrable, where one generation of trees after another had risen and fallen, and were now lying across each other in every direction, and in various stages of decay. The Camp itself had been wholly swept away; and the bed of the rivulet, by which it had stood, was now more than ten rods wide, and with banks from ten to fifteen feet high. Four or five other brooks were passed, whose beds were enlarged, some of them to twice the extent of this. In several the water was now only three or four feet wide, while the bed of ten, fifteen, or twenty rods in width, was covered for miles with stones from two to five feet in diameter, that had been rolled down the mountains, and through the forests, by thousands, bearing every thing before them. Not a tree, nor the root of a tree, remained in their path. Immense piles of hemlocks and other trees, with their limbs and bark entirely bruised off, were lodged all the way on both sides as they had been driven in among the standing and half standing trees on the banks. While the party were climbing the Mountain, thirty "slides" were counted, some of which began near the line where the soil and vegetation terminate, and growing wider as they descended, were estimated to contain more than a hundred acres. These were all on the western side of the mountains. They were composed of the whole surface of the earth, with all its growth of woods, and its loose rocks, to the depth of 15, 20, and 30 feet. And wherever the slides of two projecting mountains met, forming a vast ravine, the depth was still greater.

Such was the report which the party from the mountains gave. The intelligence which Mr. Crawford, and the gentleman accompanying him, brought from the Notch, was of a more melancholy nature. The road, though a turnpike, was in such a state, that they were obliged to walk to the Notch House, lately kept by Mr. Willey, a distance of six miles. All the bridges over the Amonosuck, five in number, those over the Saco, and those over the tributary streams of both, were gone. In some places the road was excavated to the depth of 15 and 20 feet; and in others it was covered with earth and rocks, and trees, to as great a height. In the Notch, and along the deep defile below it, for a mile and a half, to the Notch House, and as far as could be seen beyond it, no appearance of the road, except in one place for two or three rods, could be discovered. The steep sides of the mountains, first on one hand, then on the other, and then on both, had slid down into this narrow passage, and formed a continued mass from one end to the other, so that a turnpike will probably not be made through it again very soon if ever. The Notch House was found uninjured; though the barn adjoining it by a shed was crushed, and under its ruins were two dead horses. The house was entirely deserted; the beds were tumbled; their covering was turned down; and near them upon chairs and on the floor lay the wearing apparel of the several members of the family; while the money and papers of Mr. Willey were lying in his open bar. From these circumstances it seemed almost certain, that the whole family were destroyed; and it soon became quite so, by the arrival of a brother of Mr. Crawford from his father's six miles further East. From him we learnt that the valley of the Saco for many miles, presented an uninterrupted scene of desolation. The two Crawfords were the nearest neighbours of Willey. Two days had now elapsed since the storm, and nothing had been heard of his family in either direction,--There was no longer any room to doubt, that they had been alarmed by the noise of the destruction around them, had sprung from their beds, and fled naked from the house, and in the utter darkness had been soon overtaken by the falling mountains and rushing torrents. The family, which is said to have been amiable and res-

pectable, consisted of nine persons, Mr. Willy and his wife and five young children of theirs, with a hired man and boy. After the fall of a single slide last June, they were more ready to take the alarm, though they did not consider their situation dangerous, as none had ever been known to fall there previous to this. Whether more rain fell now than had ever been known to fall before in the same length of time, at least since the sides of the mountains were covered with so heavy a growth of woods, or whether the slides were produced by the falling of such a quantity of rain so suddenly, after the earth had been rendered light and loose by the long drought, I am utterly unable to say. All I know is, that at the close of a rainy day, the clouds seemed all to come together over the White Mountains, and at midnight discharge[d] their contents at once in a terrible burst of rain, which produced the effects that have now been described. Why these effects were produced now, and never before, is known only to Him, who can rend the heavens when he will, and come down, and cause the mountains to flow down at his presence.

Yours, &c.

CARLOS WILCOX.

(G) [THE NOTCH AND THE HOUSE WITHIN THE NOTCH DESCRIBED, from the New-Hampshire Patriot & State Gazette, Concord, N.H., Sept. 18, 1826, p. 2. From a very long and important account of the catastrophe, I select only the following as significant for our purposes:]

What is commonly called "the Notch" is a narrow pass from 20 to 30 feet wide and four or five rods long, formed by an almost perpendicular wall of 70 or 80 feet in height on the left or north east side, and on the right by another less elevated, which may have broken off from the former. Through that narrow opening passed the road, built some years ago with great labor and expense. Through that, also, runs the river Saco, there but a humble brook, whose source is a small pond a few rods distant, and concealed by the thicket on the easterly side of the road. Often, however, the Notch is understood to be the whole of the deep and narrow ravine formed by the opposing lines of mountain battlements, which, commencing at the opening above described, and gradually rising as you approach the notch house, are there probably two thousand feet in height. When I speak of the notch, I mean the first four or five rods of that wonderful pass. Through this notch the water poured on the fatal night of 28th August, with most astonishing power, breaking up the foundations of the road and sweeping in its course rocks of many tons weight. All, who have travelled the notch road, will remember the curving wall of about 30 feet in height situate between the notch and the Silver Cascade. That was swept down into the valley below, by a slide from the east, which, in its course excavated the earth to considerable depth, throwing up across the line of the road a wall 15 or 20 feet high, of huge rocks, and extending four or five rods into the gulf below. I shall pass without notice the "Silver Cascade," and the more beautiful "Floom Brook," which within fifty rods of each other pour their fleecy waters hundreds of feet down the mountain from the east. I shall, also, pass without notice, the numerous slides which destroyed nearly every vestige of the road for several miles below the notch house. The desolations around that house are of deeper and more painful interest

There had lived for eleven months the prosperous and respectable family of Mr. Samuel Willey, consisting of himself, his wife and five children, together with two hired men of the name of Allen and Nickerson; there, within a few rods of the house, they were all overwhelmed and destroyed by the avalanches from the mountain, on the fatal night of the 28th.

The house stood on the west side of the road and was connected by a shed to the barn on the north. In front of the house, towards the east, had been a beautiful little meadow, along whose further margin, at the foot of the mountain, ran the Saco. From the house to the foot of the westerly range was not more than ten or fifteen rods. The avalanche, which destroyed the family, commenced near the summit of this range and a little southerly of the house, and collecting at the base, divided into two portions, one passing on the north and crushing the barn and shed, the other, south of the house, overwhelming and sweeping away the unfortunate family; while the centre was gradually pushed forward to within eight or ten feet of the house. A log ten feet long and two in diameter, which had apparently lain some years in the ground, rolled so slowly towards the house as to be stopped, ten feet in the rear of it, by merely an old table frame. The only place of safety was the house, and a very small piece of ground in front and rear of it. From all appearances it is probable, that Mr. and Mrs. Willey and the hired men, alarmed at the dangers of their situation, had not been abed when the calamity happened. They no doubt took the children and attempted to flee for safety to a more elevated spot 30 or 40 rods south where Mr. Willey had talked of building a camp; but that spot was also visited by a still more formidable slide. About 40 rods further south was a third slide nearly as large as the last. Before we arrived, Mr. and Mrs. Willey and David Allen had been found fifty rods from the house dreadfully mangled. Since then two children have been found in the same direction. The meadow is no longer to be seen; it is entirely buried by the immense quantity of sand, gravel, rocks and trees from the mountains....

(H) [THE WHITE MOUNTAINS, written by a brother of the victim, the Rev. B. G. Willey (?), appeared in the Repository and Observer, Concord, N.H., Sept. 29, 1826, p. 159. It was copied from an earlier appearance in the Christian Mirror, wherein the homiletical and rhetorical flavor were, doubtless, especially welcome. It is one of the best attempts in the press dispatches to enter into the psychology of the victims, who "had no alternative, but to meet the doom which was their appointed allotment. Such were, probably, the circumstances; but as there are no survivors to tell of the horrors of that awful night, we shall never know them with certainty, till the records of eternity disclose them."]

THE WHITE MOUNTAINS.

The following account of the late terrible disaster at the white mountains, is copied from the last Christian Mirror. It will derive special interest from the fact, that it is from the pen of a brother of the unfortunate man, who, with his family, perished beneath the "wreck of matter" which was precipitated upon them by the angry elements. as a reason for not earlier giving to his friend, to whom the letter containing the description which follows, was addressed, the writer says:—

"My feelings were in too high a state of agitation to attempt to write on what had happened. Even now, so many days after the mournful scene has passed, my bosom heaves with grief, not unlike the ocean which swells and rolls its extended billows long after the storm has ceased to rage. Our family have been visited with the sorest affliction. To lose so many relatives in one fatal moment, ignorant of the distress through which they passed—left in awful suspense to form a thousand heart-rending conjectures, without the possibility of obtaining an accurate knowledge of their condition,—to think of death raining, in this or that horrid shape, on the partners of our blood,—must, you will readily believe, have pierced the bosoms of remaining kindred with sorrow too deep to be soon forgotten. Long will our breasts remain scarred with their wounds,—a state, which agrees but too well with the present appearance of the region, whence springs our sorrow,—where a cheerless desolation prevails, though the tempest which produced it has ceased its fury, and the thunder of that dreadful night no longer rolls its tremendous peal amidst the cliffs and defiles of those majestic hills which being daily exposed to our view are the daily remembrancers of our woe. A mournful sense of what has passed we shall carry with us to our graves."

[Then follows a particular and minute description of the objects which present themselves in approaching the mountain from Conway, no competent idea of which, as the writer well observes, can be conveyed "by the most accurate and definite language." "Our friend took" is worth a thousand descriptions. The mountains' sides 'indicate the desolating tempest which had but recently spent its force upon their summits—torn by avalanches of different sizes, succeeding each other in quick succession, and ploughing long and deep grooves down their lengthened declivities. One came down to the N. E. of Crawford's house, filled up the channel, and turned the current in a new direction, so that it ran into the house, and filled up the lower rooms with water to the depth of two or three feet.]"

'After leaving Crawford's and proceeding to the place of our destination, when we entered the opening, a hundred rods perhaps below the Notch house, which was still hidden from sight by an intervening ascent,—we met the first great slip which had crossed our path on level ground, and in some places actually ascending 50 or 60, and I know not but a hundred rods,—so great was the force with which it had been propelled from the base of the mountain. After passing this, which consisted of large rocks, trees and sand, and which was impassable except by footmen, and reaching the elevation just mentioned, we came in full view of the Notch house, and all the ruins which surround it. On our right stood in lengthened prospect the precipitous mountains, which had been scourged and riven by the fires and tempests of many succeeding years. On our left and in front stood those which though once covered with a wood of pleasant green, now present their sides lacerated and torn by the convulsions of the recent storm. The plain before us appeared one continued bed of sand and rocks, with here and there the branches of green trees, and their peeled and shivered trunks, with old logs, which from their appearance must long have been buried beneath the mountain soil. With these the meadow, that stretches along before the Notch house, was covered,—and so deep that none of the long grass, nor even the alders that grew there, are to be seen. Moving on from this site, we came upon the next large slip, which continued till it met that of another, which came down below the Notch house, and within a rod of it. Thus far it was one continued heap of ruins;

and beyond the house the slips continued many rods. The one back of the house started in a direction, in which it must have torn it away, had it not been arrested by a ridge of land extending back from the house to a more precipitous part of the mountain. Descending to the point of this ridge, the slip divided, and sought the valleys which lie at the base,—one part carrying away in its course the stable above the house, and the other passing immediately below it, leaving the house itself uninjured. It is this part, which is generally supposed to have carried away my brother and his family. It is judged, from appearances, to be the last that came down. It is the common, and a very probable conjecture, that the family designed, at first, to keep the house, and did actually remain in it, till after the descent of most of the slips. From the commencement of the storm in its greatest fury, they were probably on the alert, though previously to this some of them might have retired to rest,—that the children had, was pretty evident from appearances in the house, when first entered after the disaster. My brother, it is pretty certain, had not undressed; he stood watching the movements and vicinities of the awfully anxious season. When the storm had increased to such violence, as to threaten their safety, and descending avalanches seemed to be sounding 'the world's last knell,' he retired his family, and prepared them, as he could, for a speedy flight, trembling every moment, lest they should be buried under the ruins of their falling habitation. At this hurried, agitating moment of awful suspense, the slide which parted back of the house is supposed to have come down, a part of which struck, and carried away the stable. Hearing the crash, they instantly and precipitately rushed from their dwelling, and attempted to flee in the opposite direction; but the thick darkness concealed all objects from their sight, they were almost instantly engulfed in the devastating torrent, which passed below the house; and which precipitated them together with rocks and trees into the swollen and frantic tide below, and cut off at once all hopes of escape. Amidst the rage and foam of so much water, filled as it was with so many instruments of death, they had no alternative, but to meet the doom which was their appointed allotment.

Such were, probably, the circumstances; but as there are no survivors to tell of the horrors of that awful night, we shall never know them with certainty, till the records of eternity disclose them.

N. B. Six, of the nine bodies that were lost, have been found; and it is expected the others will be.—The Notch road is not so much damaged as was first apprehended.—Conway has, perhaps, received less injury than benefit from the freshet. It destroyed considerable produce, but the people are compensated for the loss of this by the increased richness of their lands.

(I) [THE COTTAGE OF THE HILLS, a poem by "Marcian". It appeared originally in the Boston Evening Gazette, Sept. 30, 1826, p. 1, a facsimile of which appears on the next page. It was reprinted in The Portsmouth Journal of Literature & Politics, Portsmouth, N.H., Sat., Oct. 7, 1826, p. 1. This and the poem, "Storm on the White Mountains", (See below) are interesting examples of the impact of the catastrophe on the popular mind.]



ORIGINAL POETRY.

How sweetly 'neath the pale moonlight,
That slumbers on the woodland height,
Yon little cot appears:---just seen
Amid the twining evergreen,
That fondly clings around its form,
To shield it from the midnight storm.
Poor trembler, I have seen like thee,
Fond woman in her constancy,
E'en when the stormiest hour came on,
Cling closer to the much loved one,
Nor dream till every tie was parted,
That all within was hollow-hearted.
Yon little cot looks wond'rous fair,
And yet no taper's light is there!
--Say, whither are its dwellers gone?
Bird of the mountain, thou alone
Saw by the lightning from on high,
The mountain-torrent rushing by,
Beheld upon its wild wave borne,
The tall pine from the hill-top torn.
Amid its roar, thine ear alone
Heard the shrill shriek--the dying groan,--
The prayer that struggled to be free--
Breathed forth in life's last agony!
In vain--no angel-form was there,
The wild wave drowned the sufferer's prayer
Adown the rocky glen they sped,
The mountain spirits shrieked and fled!

'Twas morning;--and the glorious sun,
Shone on the work, which death had done.
On shattered cliff--and broken branch,
The ruin of the Avalanche!
And there lay one, upon whose brow,
Age had not shed its wintry snow;
The fragment in whose clenched hand told,
How firm on life had been his hold,
While the curled lip--the upturned eye,
Told all a father's agony!
And there, beside the torrent's path,
Too pure, too sacred for its wrath,
Lay one, whose arms still closely pressed,
An infant to her frozen breath.
The kiss upon its pale cheek sealed,
A mother's quenchless love revealed.
Sire, mother, offspring--all were there,
Not one had 'scaped the conqueror's snare.
Not one was left--to weep alone,
The 'dwellers of the hill' were gone!
The wild-bird soaring far on high,
Beheld them with averted eye.
The forest prowler, as he passed,
Locked down upon the rich repast,
But dared not banquet. 'Twas a spell

Which bound them in that lonely dell.
And there they slept--so peacefully,
That the lone pilgrim passing by,
Had deemed them of some brighter
sphere,
Condemned awhile to linger here,
Whose pure eyes sickening at the
sight
Of sin--and sorrow's withering
blight,
Had sought in tears that silent glen,
And slumbered--ne'er to wake again.

And there they found them--
stranger hands
Bore them to where yon cottage stands,
And there one summer evening's close,
They left them to their last repose.

Such the brief page thy story fills,
Thou lonely 'cottage of the hills'
E'en while I gaze, night's gloomy
shade,
Is gathering--as the moonbeams fade.
Around thy walls they faintly play,--
They tremble--gleam--then flit away:--
They fade--they vanish down the dell,
Lone 'Cottage of the Hills'--farewell!

MARCIAN

"THE COTTAGE OF THE HILLS."

How sweetly 'neath the pale moonlight,
That slumbers on the woodland height,
Yon little cot appears:---just seen
Amid the twining evergreen,
That fondly clings around its form,
To shield it from the midnight storm.
Poor trembler, I have seen like thee,
Fond woman in her constancy,
E'en when the stormiest hour came on,
Cling closer to the much loved one,
Nor dream till every tie was parted,
That all within was hollow-hearted.
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And yet no taper's light is there!
--Say, whither are its dwellers gone?
Bird of the mountain, thou alone
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And there they slept--so peacefully,
That the lone pilgrim passing by,
Had deemed them of some brighter sphere,
Condemned awhile to linger here,
Whose pure eyes sickening at the sight
Of sin--and sorrow's withering blight,
Had sought in tears that silent glen,
And slumbered--ne'er to wake again.

And there they found them--stranger hands
Bore them to where yon cottage stands,
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E'en while I gaze, night's gloomy shade,
Is gathering--as the moonbeams fade.
Around thy walls they faintly play,--
They tremble--gleam--then flit away:--
They fade--they vanish down the dell,
Lone 'Cottage of the Hills'--farewell!

MARCIAN.

(J) ["STORM ON THE WHITE MOUNTAINS"---poem which first appeared in the Columbian Centinel, Boston, Sept. 13, 1826, p. 2, signed "Orolio." It is followed by a note on Mr. Willey's dog, which survived the event and assisted rescuers in locating the dead bodies.]

Storm on the White Mountains.
--FOR THE CENTINEL.

THE day was clos'd; the hour had come for rest;
And love's response came warm from every breast;
Mid mountain silence rose the Hymn to heaven,
For whose mere music sin had been forgiven.
Their father's blessing on the children's head,
The kiss maternal spoke them to their bed.
Thus had the Notch-House tenants sought repose,
And slept in peace to wake to deathful woes.
Around the Mount the massive clouds now roll,
Till the vast volume mocks the air's control;
Heaven's teeming tides terrific torrents pour,
Till earth the onset can sustain no more;
Trees, rocks, whole forests bend before the surge,
And, driven downward, dire destruction urge.
Swift toward the Notch descends the current strong;
The thundering rocks roll heavily along;
With this is heard the water's whelming rush;
And then at intervals the timber's crush.
Rous'd by the roar the Notch House tenants rise:
Waves toss, earth trembles, blackness blots the skies:
"Oh Father! Mother! Children!" is the cry;
They cling together and rush forth to fly.
"Stay, Willey, stay," the calmer Allen cried,
"Here is your only refuge from the tide."
Down from the mountain came a deeper swell,
It roll'd with awful roar; the stable fell.
Out rush'd the father, mad with wild alarms,
His youngest child half-crush'd within his arms;
His wife instinctively behind him ran,
With her the children, last, each still loth man;
For Nicholson and Allen both declare
Death lies before them; yet this lot they share;
With these their reason still prevail'd o'er fear,
They went but death bound with the hearts most dear;
Or else, perchance, they thought their toil strung arm
Might snatch some dear one from impending harm.
'Twas rash, but generous; 'twas nobly done;
And proves the warmth of hearts by kindness won.
On swept dark ruin; wide and far it spread,
And danger deepen'd wheresoe'er they fled.
'Twas but a moment's flight; destruction's tide
Had ris'n, 'twas full, 'twas deep, 'twas far, 'twas
wide.
What throes are heaving now each anguish'd breast!
One moment more, each heart in death will rest.
Horror! what thunder breaks the ear of night?
Oh! from one star for one faint ray of light!
Can that be thunder from a lightning flash?
No, 'tis the deep riv'd mountain's downswept crash!
Earth, trees, and rocks themselves are roll'd along
Before the cloud-fall'n torrent dark, swift, strong.
Mother and children, early borne away,
Drink the black draught, entomb'd alive in clay.
The two men, grappling with a rolling rock,
Each perish, crush'd with instantaneous shock,
Where with his child the speechless father flies,
And upturn'd wood in deathful meshes lies,
Down o'er the ruin comes the forest's pride,
Floating terrific on the tossing tide:
Caught in its wide-spread arms the father falls;
"Seize on the topmost bough, my child!" he calls,

Forth from his grasp he frantic flings the child,
And on the topmost branch it seizes, wild.
"Father, come here!" no father's voice replied:
"Mother! oh Mother!" loud the child then cried;
No mother sooth'd that half distracted cry,
No sister, brother, friend, nor help was nigh:
For six miles round no living breath was heard
Save thine, lone child, and that of some small
bird.

The tree rolls over: in a darkness deep,
It whelms the voyager in dreamless sleep.
The child's rude terrors fade in sudden gloom;
Leaves and the winter-grass its wave-wave tomb.
The first cold whelming of that fatal flow
Chill'd the heart's current, quench'd the vital
glow,

All, all are perish'd: awful is the roar.
But no one dreads, or heeds, or hears it more.

The sun rose cloudless from that stygian night.
The sun gilt brightly that appalling sight.
More golden glory never robed the morn.
Earth never view'd her vesture more forlorn.
Such gay wild grandeur never met the eye,
Commixt where heart-appalling ruins lie.
Bright drops of rain on every leaf were laid.
Each sun-lit wood in silver seem'd array'd.
Uprooting forests gleam'd like sprouting gems;
And bright cascades like mountain diadems.
And when the travellers astonish'd go
The fate of Willey and his house to know,
Bare, bladeless plains where late were pathless
woods, [floods;
Or corn-fields ponds, on roads they find deep
And there, sad sight, the Notch-House silent stood;
Unmov'd, unharm'd by that tremendous flood;
The rolling rocks had pass'd on either side,
And left it standing midst a stony tide!
The doors were open; and the beds unmade;
At every bedside there their clothes were laid;
Money and papers open in the bar;
All proves they woke at some tremendous jar,
Affrighted fled, nor had one thought to save
Aught but their threaten'd lives from yawning
grave.

Would that the Indian's faith had still been
there,
Peopling with viewless forms that mountain air,
Dissuaded mortals from the dwelling high,
And left the realm to dwellers of the sky.
Or, taught to pass in haste the rude defile
With captive beauty, muttering prayers the while.
OROLIO.

White Mountain disaster. A letter from Lancaster, N. H. in giving an account of the late calamity, mentions, "that Mr. Willey's dog, after leaving the house with the unfortunate family, returned to it, and preserved his life. He was much bruised, but assisted in finding the bodies of the family which were discovered."

The Concord Patriot says "we learn that the bodies of the oldest and youngest children of Mr. W. have since been found near where the others were discovered."

(K) [NANCY'S HILL, from Jacob B. Moore's New Hampshire Journal, Concord, N.H., Sept. 11, 1826, p. 2, frequently reprinted. See the Boston Daily American Statesman, Sept. 14, 1826, p. 2; The Portsmouth Journal of Literature & Politics, Portsmouth, N.H., Sept. 16, 1826, p. 2; Essex Register, Salem, Mass., Thurs., Sept. 14, 1826, p. 2. This legend supplies to the accounts of the catastrophe a marriageable young girl, an unknown young man who did not stay to wed, and unworthy motives in the young man. Since "Nancy's Hill" was printed along with the death of the Willey family, I believe that it suggested to Hawthorne the alteration in the age of Eliza-Ann Willey (actually only 12) and the hint of romance in his tale.]

NANCY'S HILL. A few miles below the Notch of the White Mountains, in the valley of the Saco, is a little rise of land called "Nancy's Hill." It was formerly covered with a thick growth of trees, a little cluster of which is yet suffered to remain, probably from the sad story connected with the spot. The pass through the Gap of the mountains was discovered by Nash, a hunter, who, with others in their excursions long before the settlement of that part of the country, used to make this hill a resting place, and draw together the thick boughs and tops of the smaller trees so as to provide a temporary shelter. This spot for years after inhabitants began to settle along the rivers, was a common halting-place, and the grantees of our northern townships, many of whom lived in and about Portsmouth, passed over this route to their lands. Col. W----, of Portsmouth, settled upon his fine township of Dartmouth [Jefferson] in 1773; and among his servants was Nancy----a young woman of respectable connexions, who had fallen deeply in love with a young man, also in the same service. At the close of autumn they had agreed to go to Portsmouth, where they were to be married; and the girl, confiding in the attachment of her lover, placed in his keeping her little stock of money, and hard earnings of several years industry. For some cause or other, she was induced, before the time fixed for their departure, to visit Lancaster. When she returned, the young man was gone; and she determined to follow him. The snows of an early winter had already fallen to some depth; there was not a house between Dartmouth and Bartlett, a distance of thirty miles; and the way through the wild woods a foot path only. The family labored to dissuade her from the journey; but she persisted in her design, and wrapping herself in her long cloak, proceeded on her way. Snow after snow succeeded, and the very sky seemed to glisten with frost, for several weeks, when some persons from Bartlett passing up this route, reached the hill at night. On lighting their fires, an unearthly figure stood before them, beneath the bending branches, wrapped in a robe of ice, and reclining her head, as if in sleep, against the trunk of a large tree.--It was the lifeless form of Nancy, who, fatigued with her journey thus far, had stopped here to rest, and falling asleep, died of the intense cold.

(L) [LETTER OF THOMAS C. UPHAM TO JOHN FARMER, of Concord, N.H., published in the New Hampshire Historical Society Collections, III (1832), pp. 266-280. (On pp. 224-232 of the same volume is a slight expansion of Jacob B. Moore's report on the storm and avalanches given in "E" above.)]

Brunswick, Me. Sept. 1828.

MR. FARMER,

In compliance with your suggestion, I will communicate to you, for the use of the New-Hampshire Historical Society, some facts in relation to the destruction of the Willey family by a slide from the White Mountains in 1826. I do not allow myself to suppose, that my interest in the destiny of that unfortunate family will need any apology. There are some events of a domestic nature, that are worthy of a longer remembrance than is commonly allotted to instances of private suffering. Individuals die, and are forgotten, whole families disappear from the face of the earth, and speedily no memorial of them remains. But it has seemed to me, that the remembrance of the recent sad events, in the remote solitude of the White Mountains, ought to be perpetuated. Cer-

We copy the following from Mr. Moore's New-Hampshire Journal.

NANCY'S HILL. A few miles below the Notch of the White Mountains, in the valley of the Saco, is a little rise of land called "Nancy's Hill." It was formerly covered with a thick growth of trees, a little cluster of which is yet suffered to remain, probably from the sad story connected with the spot. The pass through the Gap of the mountains was discovered by Nash, a hunter, who, with others in their excursions long before the settlement of that part of the country, used to make this hill a resting place, and draw together the thick boughs and tops of the smaller trees so as to provide a temporary shelter. This spot for years after inhabitants began to settle along the rivers, was a common halting-place, and the grantees of our northern townships, many of whom lived in and about Portsmouth, passed over this route to their lands. Col. W----, of Portsmouth, settled upon his fine township of Dartmouth [Jefferson] in 1773; and among his servants was Nancy----a young woman of respectable connexions, who had fallen deeply in love with a young man, also in the same service. At the close of autumn they had agreed to go to Portsmouth, where they were to be married; and the girl, confiding in the attachment of her lover, placed in his keeping her little stock of money, and hard earnings of several years industry. For some cause or other, she was induced, before the time fixed for their departure, to visit Lancaster. When she returned, the young man was gone; and she determined to follow him. The snows of an early winter had already fallen to some depth; there was not a house between Dartmouth and Bartlett, a distance of thirty miles; and the way through the wild woods a foot path only. The family labored to dissuade her from the journey; but she persisted in her design, and wrapping herself in her long cloak, proceeded on her way. Snow after snow succeeded, and the very sky seemed to glisten with frost, for several weeks, when some persons from Bartlett passing up this route, reached the hill at night. On lighting their fires, an unearthly figure stood before them, beneath the bending branches, wrapped in a robe of ice, and reclining her head, as if in sleep, against the trunk of a large tree.--It was the lifeless form of Nancy, who, fatigued with her journey thus far, had stopped here to rest, and falling asleep, died of the intense cold.

tain I am, that the traveller, who penetrates the Pass of those celebrated summits, will linger to survey the spot, where its inhabitants perished. Long after their bodies have mouldered into dust, their story will be told, and their fate will be heard with sympathy. It appears desirable, that the particulars of this destruction should become a matter of record, while they are yet of recent occurrence, and not be left to the uncertain and unsatisfactory keeping of tradition.

The White Mountains, situated in the northern part of New-Hampshire, are often visited, and too well known to require a minute description here. The central summit which is more than six thousand feet in height, is appropriately called in honor of the Father of our country, MOUNT WASHINGTON. These mountains have become to the grateful imaginations of the people the commemorative symbols of those great men, whom Providence

has raised up for their defence and glory. To the right and left of Mount Washington rise, with a scarcely inferior elevation, Mounts Adams, Jefferson, Madison, and Munroe. The southern part of this sublime range is broken through by a narrow opening of many miles in length, forming a Pass, merely wide enough, for a considerable distance, for the Saco river and the road. The upper extremity where it is but a few feet wide, is called the Notch. Two miles south of the Notch, the lofty summits which had hitherto approached very near each other, just giving room enough for the unambitious Saco, and the fearful traveller to make their way, suddenly recede on the west side of the river, leaving at their base a level opening or flat of about twenty acres. To this remote and solitary spot, (the nearest house, that of Abel Crawford, being six miles distant,) Samuel Willey, Jun. with his family, came to take up their residence in November of 1825. It was here they lived; and in this place on the following year, they all suddenly perished. The bottom of the valley was their grave; the dust of the mountain tops, their covering.

Mr. Willey, the head of the family, was born March 31, 1788. His parents are respectable people, still living in the upper part of Conway, N. H. As we naturally desire to know something of the character of those, in whose behalf we are disposed to yield our sympathy, I am happy to learn from sources to be relied on, that Mr. Willey was a man fit, on many accounts, to secure respect. He was one of those inestimable men, whom we often find among our farmers; kind and gentle in his feelings, of a cautious and sound judgment, sincere in his professions, and industrious in his habits.

The farmers of our land, though not wealthy, generally possess what may be termed an independent property; they live a laborious and retired life, except that with those of their immediate neighborhood they commonly form an intimate acquaintance. And hence I am led to remark, that early marriages, which the celebrated Franklin so much approved of, are frequent; and that, on September 12th of 1812, young Willey entered into that relation with a respectable young woman, whose maiden name was Polly Lovejoy. She was born April 19th, 1791, and thus the age of the husband at the time of his marriage was twenty-four, and of the wife twenty-one. Perhaps these notices may be thought unnecessarily minute, merely because the subjects of them were not elevated in point of rank and fortune. This is an unhappy prepossession. Human character and sufferings are at all times interesting: it is a dishonor to profess to be exempt from an interest in the fortunes of our fellow-men, of whatever condition in life. The virtues of those in humble stations have been too seldom celebrated, and their sufferings have too seldom been visited with the tear of sym-

pathy.

The parents of Miss Lovejoy, (the mother is still living,) dwelt but a short distance from the elder Willey's, although their farm was on the opposite (the westerly) side of the Saco river. The daughter possessed a good form and an amiable disposition; but vivacity was her characteristic. Her spirit was agitated even by trifling incidents, as the leaves of the forest are moved by the gentlest wind. Her soul was all life, motion, feeling; nor was this sprightliness attendant on her youth merely, but being a part of her nature, it showed itself in maturer age. More than all, both the husband and the wife were deeply impressed with religious sentiments. The sublime wilderness of woods and mountains, in the midst of which they lived, naturally led them to serious contemplations on the great Author of nature; their Bible confirmed to them what the works of nature had less distinctly intimated; and they found, as there is good reason to believe, that true solace, which men stand in need of in all situations of life, and which nothing but religion can impart. Thus cheerful, serious, and laborious, with enough to supply their present wants and those of their children, they formed a household, on which the blessing of God seemed greatly to rest.

Such, at least, were my feelings in respect to them, when making a short stay, as I recently had occasion to, at their first place of residence. The house in the lower part of Bartlett and on the west side of the Saco river, which they occupied before removing into the Pass of the White Mountains, is one story and neatly built, and may be known by having in front a vast rock, nearly perpendicular, and to appearance some hundreds of feet in height. It rises only a few rods distance from the house; is worn in places by the rains, and bears a few stunted trees on its apparently inaccessible brow.—Immediately in the rear, and thirty feet perhaps below the level of the house, a pleasant and well cultivated meadow extends as far as the Saco river, although it has sustained some injury from recent floods. In this retired, peaceful, and pleasant spot, the happy family of Mr. Willey had taken up their residence. Their farm afforded them a comfortable subsistence; and the toil which was required in its cultivation and in the management of their household affairs, was sweetened by the spirit of contentment, as already intimated by a religious trust. They endeavored to discharge their various duties in the love and fear of that great Being, who dwells alike in the populous city and the desert, and who hears the cry of the raven, and sees the fall of the sparrow. If retirement, health, a sufficiency of temporal goods, love for each other, and trust in God, could secure happiness, no doubt they possessed it, although not exempt from a portion of those

cares and griefs, which are the common lot of all.

At the period, which has been already mentioned, Mr. Willey thought it his duty to leave his residence in Bartlett, pleasant as it was in many respects, and to establish himself and his household elsewhere. A house had been erected by some previous occupant in the lonely spot in the bosom of the White Mountains, which has been described. It was here Mr. Willey took up his residence; and however it might prove to himself and family, the change in his dwelling place, promised, at least, to be a blessing to the travellers, who frequently pass through those mountainous regions. To entertain travellers indeed was a contemplated part of their business at their removal; and while they did good to others, it became a means of subsistence to themselves. The travellers who came through the Pass of the Mountains, spoke with gratitude of their kindness and attentions. The house, where they resided, was denominated, as it was then the nearest building to the narrowest part of the Pass or Notch, the *Notch House*; and none, who called there, could help observing the order,

and peace, and cheerfulness, which pervaded it. And perhaps the moral loveliness, which this hospitable mansion presented, was heightened to the imagination of those, who visited it, by being shut out as it were, from the rest of the world, and blooming in the midst of such vast and terrific solitudes.—But it is not now as it was once; the traveller calls there, and they are gone; nor were they taken from the earth in any ordinary manner. I will explain the melancholy catastrophe.

Although the hills and mountains are spoken of in scripture as everlasting, we find the Almighty hand, that erected, can throw them down. It is true, we have not been called in this country to witness such deplorable devastations, as were caused in Switzerland, in 1806, by the fall of the Rossberg; but there has been something similar; parts of mountains have repeatedly come down into the adjacent country. About fifteen years ago, a land-slip or slide, (as such descents of earth are termed by the inhabitants of our mountainous regions,) came down the whole length of a large swell, called the Whiteface Mountain, in Sandwich, N. H. It started near the top of the mountain; and the earth, trees and rocks, that came down, covered, as I was informed, not less than six acres. For very many years nothing of this kind had happened in the White Mountains, worthy of notice, until the 9th of July, 1826. That day Mr. Abel Crawford, who lives six miles south, and was the nearest neighbor to Mr. Willey in that direction, was at the Notch house. It had been very rainy, but towards night cleared off. Just about the time of the rain's ceasing, a slide started from the top of the mountain back of Mr. Willey's house, and in a west direction from the house; as near as could be judged, an half a mile distant. The part of the mountain, which

had started, descended with prodigious power, bearing large rocks, and logs, and in some cases, trees standing; but not faster, as Mr. Crawford supposed, who gave me this account, than a man could walk. Nearly at the same time, another slide started from the same mountain, pursuing a parallel course, the first terminating at twelve rods distance from Mr. Willey's house, the other at sixty rods. This event undoubtedly alarmed Mr. Willey's family, who were witnesses of it; but as nothing of the kind had happened for many years before, and perhaps never to their knowledge, they concluded to remain for the present in the residence they had selected. The slide came so near the house, that Mrs. Willey caught two of her children in her arms, to escape down the valley. A traveller, some days afterwards, asked her in relation to the dangers of their situation, and she replied, that strangers, who from various causes were led through the mountains, were equally exposed to danger. She further expressed a perfect reliance on the protection of Providence, and a disposition to acquiesce in whatever they might be ordered to bear. The same traveller observes, that he dined at the house in company with some others on the 17th of July; that he had seldom seen a more interesting family; and that the children, of whom there were several, and who were instructed solely by their mother, were remarkably intelligent, well-behaved, contented, and happy.

But this happiness was not destined to continue long. On Monday, the 28th of August, there was a very violent rain storm, commencing in the morning, and continuing until eleven at night. The rivers rose rapidly above their banks; the people of the Amonoosuck, to the west of the White Mountains, were suddenly alarmed by the general overflow of their meadow grounds, and the destruction of their flocks and buildings. The

family of Mr. Abel Crawford, who lives in another direction on the banks of the Saco, were first alarmed by the flowing of the water of that river into their house, which is fifteen feet above the usual level of its bed; and by the bleating of a flock of sheep, which were swept down from a pasturo an half a mile above. On that dreadful night there were more than an hundred slides from the White Mountains; mighty as they are, they seemed to be loosened from their foundations.

Imagine, then, the situation of the helpless and terrified family of Mr. Willey, at the distance of six miles from the nearest human being, and directly in the midst of these huge crumbling piles. The pass of the White Mountains is of itself terrible; the traveller makes his way under piles apparently three thousand feet high; beneath him are precipices of vast depth; the wind sends forth continually a hoarse and presageful murmur; the trees wave darkly; and the barren parts of the mountains display huge masses of earth and stones

often of many tons weight, just ready to leap into the valley. How much more terrible, then, when the whole body of the mountain is moved to and fro by a tempest; the trees, torn from their moorings, sail down their sides; huge rocks hoarsely grind against each other, and elicit long streams of fire, as they move on, overturning every thing in their course; the earth heaves from its foundations, rushing forth from its hiding place, "like a strong man armed."

It was at such a time, that desolation, fearful, terrible desolation, gathered around the little family at the Notch House. It seemed impossible that they should escape. The river Saco, which, in heavy tempests of rain, rises at the rate of five feet an hour for many miles from its source, had undoubtedly covered the road in places, or swept it entirely away, before they had become fully aware of their perilous situation.

The family at this time consisted of Mr. and Mrs. Willey, two hired men from the town of Bartlett, viz., David Allen, aged about thirty years, and David Nicholson, in his twentieth year, and five interesting children, viz., Eliza Ann Willey, the eldest, aged twelve years; Jeremiah Lovejoy Willey, eleven years of age; Martha Glazier Willey, ten years of age; Elbridge Gerry, seven, and Sally, only three.

Beloved family! How soon were your earthly prospects destined to be fearfully and unexpectedly cut off! How much reason have those, who contemplate your fate, to exclaim, unsearchable are the ways of Providence! Ye were lovely in life; and like the father and son of Scripture, in death ye were not divided. There was one suffering, one grave, one hope. We may well suppose, the parents, when they saw the roaring waters gathering at their feet, and heard the mountains crumbling over their heads, resigned themselves with cheerfulness into the hands of God. They had been taught in the principles of the Christian religion, and undoubtedly experienced its support. And yet the ties of nature are strong; and they could not be insensible to the pangs, that often thrill in a parent's heart, when they saw the condition of their young, and interesting, and suffering children.

They all perished on the night of Monday, the 25th of August; it is impossible to determine, as not one escaped, the precise moment of their death, or the amount of suffering previously endured. Their death is universally supposed to have been on the night of Monday, because, among other reasons, if the slides, which destroyed the family, had come down before dark, no doubt some, if not all the family, might have escaped, since they move, as observed before, not faster than a person can conveniently walk.

On Tuesday, the 17th of August, a man, named Barker, going from Whitefield to Bridgetown,

came through the Pass of the White Mountains. On arriving at the Notch House, he found a large slide had started from the summit, directly back of the house. Although but a few feet wide and deep, when it started, the furrow of a half mile in length, which it ploughed down the side of the mountain, grew deep and wide, until the depth varied from twenty to twenty-five feet, and the width had increased to fifteen rods; a prodigious and overwhelming mass of trees, rocks, and earth, confusedly mingled together.—It is a singular circumstance, that this slide, as it rolled on, in the direction of Mr. Willey's house, struck a rock of some size, only a few feet in the rear of it, separated into two portions, went round the house without injuring it, destroyed the barn, which was very near to it, and passed the road about forty rods to the south. The traveller found two horses dead under the ruins of the barn; he was able also to extricate a yoke of oxen, that were under the ruins, but not killed. On entering the house, he found it empty, but it did not occur to him, that the family were destroyed. As it was late in the afternoon, when he arrived, he remained in the house until the next morning. He then proceeded on to the lower Mr. Crawford's, (Abel's), although with much difficulty, as the road was much broken up, and the bridges swept away by the river; where he arrived about noon.

In the course of Wednesday, four or five persons had collected at the Notch house; although no positive discoveries were made, they had reason to suppose, being much better acquainted with the situation of the family than the traveller before mentioned, that they were all destroyed.

On Thursday, as many as fifty persons had assembled, including many relatives and particular acquaintances. On that day, Mrs. Willey and the hired man, named Allen, were first found very near to each other, covered about two feet and a half with brush and timber; prostrate, with their hands extended upwards; lifeless, and much mutilated. The upper part of the head of both was struck off, probably by some large piece of timber. Mr. Willey was found soon after, and at no great distance; lifeless, and his limbs much broken. Two of the children and the other hired man were found a few days after; the three other children have never been found.—The bodies were found near the bed of the Saco river; and not in the track of the Slide, which encircled the house, but of another large one which had crossed the road some rods to the south of it. But it is possible and even probable, that they perished in the slide nearest the house, and were borne by the force of the current of the river to the place, where they were discovered. The remains of the bodies found, were buried near the Notch House, but have been subsequently removed to Conway.

Among the visitants to the melancholy scene, was a brother of the deceased Mr. Willey, the

Congregational minister of the town last named. I have conversed with him on this subject, and it is not necessary for those acquainted with him to add, that the most perfect reliance can be placed on his statements and opinions. In a letter written to a friend soon after the sudden and awful destruction of so many relatives, he thus feelingly and eloquently describes his visit to the place, and the reflections which occurred to him:—

“After leaving Crawford’s, and proceeding to the place of our destination, when we entered the opening, a hundred rods perhaps below the Notch House, which was still hidden from sight by an intervening ascent,—we met the first great slip which had crossed our path on level ground, and in some places actually ascending 50 or 60, and I know not but a hundred rods,—so great was the force with which it had been propelled from the base of the mountain. After passing this, which consisted of large rocks, and which was impassable except by footmen, and reaching the elevation just mentioned, we came in full view of the Notch house, and all the ruins which surround it. On our right stood in lengthened prospect the precipitous mountains, which had been scored and riven by the fires and tempests of many succeeding years. On our left and in front stood those, which though once covered with a wood of pleasant green, now present their sides lacerated and torn by the convulsions of the recent storm. The plain before us appeared one continued bed of sand and rocks, with here the branches of green trees, and there peeled and shivered trunks, with old logs, which from their appearance must long have been buried beneath the mountain soil. With these, the meadow that stretches along before the Notch House, was covered,—and so deep that none of the long grass, nor even the alders that grew there, are to be seen. Moving on from this site, we came upon the next large slip, which continued till it met that of another, which came down below the Notch House, and within a rod of it. Thus far it was one continued heap of ruins; and beyond the house the slips continued many rods. The one back of the house started in a direction in which it must have torn it away, had it not been arrested by a ridge of land extending back from the house to a more precipitous part of the mountain. Descending to the point of this ridge, the slip divided, and sought the valleys which lie at the base,—one part carrying away in its course the stable above the house, and the other passing immediately below it, leaving the house itself uninjured. It is *this* part, which is generally supposed to have carried away my brother and his family. It is judged from appearances, to be the last that came down. It is the common and very probable conjecture, that the family designed at first, to keep the house, and did actually remain in it, till after the descent of most of the slips. From the commencement

of the storm in its greatest fury, they were probably on the alert, though previous to this some of them might have retired to rest—that the children had, was pretty evident from appearances in the house, when first entered after the disaster. My brother, it is pretty certain, had not undressed; he stood watching the movements and vicissitudes of the awfully anxious season. When the storm had increased to such violence, as to threaten their safety, and descending avalanches seemed to be sounding “the world’s last knell,” he roused his family and prepared them, as he could for a speedy flight, trembling every moment, lest they should be buried under the ruins of their falling habitation. At this hurried, agitating moment of awful suspense, the slide which parted back of the house is supposed to have come down, a part of which struck, and carried away the stable. Hearing the crash, they instantly and precipitately rushed from their dwelling, and attempted to flee in the opposite direction; but the thick darkness concealing all objects from their sight, they were almost instantly engulfed in the desolating torrent, which passed below the house; and which precipitated them together with rocks and trees into the swollen and frantic tide below, and cut off at once all hope of escape. Amidst the rage and foam of so much water, filled as it was with so many instruments of death, they had no alternative, but to meet the doom which was their appointed allotment.

Such were, probably, the circumstances; but as there are no survivors to tell of the horrors of that awful night, we shall never know them with certainty, till the records of eternity disclose them. We know the family perished, and we know the circumstances of their death must have been distressing beyond description. Bring them, for a moment, before your imagination. The slide which only two months before had nearly caused their immediate death, if it had not induced timidity, must have greatly increased their sensibility to danger, and filled them with ominous forebodings, when this new war of elements began. Add to this the “horror of thick darkness,” which surrounded their dwelling—the tempest raging with unabated violence—the bursting thunder, peal answering to peal, and echoing from hill to hill—the piercing lightning, whose momentary flashes only rendered the darkness and their danger the more painfully visible—huge masses of the mountain tumbling from their awful height with accumulating and crashing ruins into the abyss below—their habitation shaken to its foundation by these concussions of nature—with all these circumstances of terror conspiring, what consternation must have filled the soul! And then, the critical instant, when the crashing of the stable by the resistless mass, warned them to flee—who can enter into their feelings at this moment of wild uproar and confusion? Snatching what of clothing they could, as a

slight defence from the "pitiless storm," children shrieking through fear—parental love consulting for their safety at the risk of their own—all rushing instantaneously from the house, as the last resort, and alas! instead of finding safety abroad, plunging into the jaws of instant death!

But oh how feeble are our conceptions, compared with the reality! It is impossible for us to know what they endured—they cannot return to tell us the story of their sufferings. They are gone. Their spirits fled away hastily, as on the wings of the wind, from one of the most dreary spots on earth, and rendered doubly so by the circumstances above narrated. Relatives and friends have one consolation; the privilege of hoping, that, from the temper and conduct they exhibited, they have departed from the turmoil and dangers of earth to the peace and security of heaven.—But it is not my object to speak their eulogy, or decide on their condition. I leave them in the hands of God, into whose presence they have sped. Meanwhile, survivors

have a lesson to learn from the mournful event. From their graves should arise so many mementos of our own mortality. Their sudden overthrow on that fearful night, presents to us, perhaps, one of the liveliest images of the judgment scene. Our minds should be deeply impressed with that inspired exhortation, to which this affliction gives a most affecting emphasis:—"Be ye therefore, ready, also; for the Son of man cometh in an hour when ye think not."

I am persuaded you will think with me, that the above extract is worthy of being preserved, both for its facts and spirit, and also for the source from which it comes. No person could feel more interest in knowing the truth in relation to this sad event, and none can appreciate more perfectly the various causes of heart-rending distress connected with it. I hope you will excuse the length of this letter. With sentiments of sincere regard,

I remain yours, &c.

THOMAS C. UPHAM.

JOHN FARMER, Esq., Concord, N. H.

[Appended is the following NOTE:] Mr. Samuel Willey, Jun. born, March 31, 1788. Mrs. Polly Lovejoy Willey, [born] April 19, 1791. Eliza Ann Willey, [born] July 19, 1814. Jeremiah Lovejoy Willey, [born] July 30, 1815. Martha Glazier Willey, [born] Sept. 22, 1816. Elbridge Gerry Willey, [born] July 13, 1819. Sally Willey, [born] July 11, 1823. David Allen, hired man, Aged about 30. David Nicholson, Do. Aged 20. Destroyed, on the night of August 26, 1826.

III. MISCELLANEOUS

(M) [MORE ABOUT THE DOG, Columbian Centinel, Boston, Sept. 13, 1826, p. 2; American Statesman, Sept. 14.]

A letter from Lancaster, N.H. in giving an account of the late calamity, mentions, "that MR. WILLEY'S dog, after leaving the house with the unfortunate family, returned to it, and preserved his life. He was much bruised, but assisted in finding the bodies of the family which were discovered."

(N) [ANOTHER SLIDE, Yeoman's Gazette, Concord, Mass., Sat., Sept. 23, 1826, p. 2:]

The Brattleboro' Messenger mentions another slide from the East side of the White Mountains, since that of the 28th of August, and that Mr. Crawford, and two gentlemen from Concord, narrowly escaped from it with their lives.

(O) [PLANS TO REPAIR THE ROAD, Columbian Centinel, Boston, Mass., Sat., Sept. 30, 1826, p. 2:]

White Mountains. A Committee which have recently surveyed the Notch of the White Mountains, have reported at a meeting held in Portland, that the Notch road, so called, can be repaired, and rendered safe and convenient for sleighs to pass the approaching winter, at an expense of \$2000; and that from 5 to 8000 dols. judiciously expended, will fully repair the road, and place it in as good a state as before the freshet.

(P) [DIFFICULTIES IN THE REPAIRING, Yeoman's Gazette, Concord, Mass., Sat., Nov. 25, 1826, p. 3:]

Portland, Nov. 17.----The following extract from a letter of one of the Directors of the White Mountains Turnpike road, dated 11th Nov. 1826, to a gentleman in this town, shows what difficulties the workmen have to contend with while repairing said road, and how much the public are indebted....

(Q) [THE TASK ACCOMPLISHED, Yeoman's Gazette, Concord, Mass., Sat., July 28, 1827, p. 2:]

White Mountains.----The number of visitors to the White Mountains is said to be much greater than formerly. The road through the Notch has been repaired and is nearly as good as it was before the slides on Mount Washington took place.

"The story has been told far and wide, and will forever be a legend of these mountains," said Hawthorne at the end of "The Ambitious Guest." "Poets have sung their fate."⁹ We have seen that many of the elements of his tale were either given or suggested by the reports available to him in Salem and Boston papers--even the hints of the marriageable girl, of the unnamed youth who left her, of strangers passing through the Notch (notably a man named Barker), and of Grandmother Lovejoy, who occasionally came to the Willeys from her home on the other side of the Saco, only a short distance away.¹⁰ (It is interesting to note that soon after the White Mountain disaster, Hawthorne began augmenting his knowledge of New Hampshire by turning to its history, legends and traditions.)¹¹ Certain other elements of his donnée were, of course, found in the Gothic romances, which considerably influenced him and his contemporaries: the terrifying aspects of nature,¹² the "solitary youth bothered about questions of fame,"¹³ the "use of dramatic foreshadowing and premonition," and shrouds, tombs, monuments, death and the supernatural--the subject matter of the graveyard school.¹⁴ Moreover, William Godwin's St. Leon, which had captivated Hawthorne as early as 1820, and, doubtless, remained an influence, dealt with the themes of fame, earthly immortality, and catastrophe resulting from overvaulting ambition.¹⁵ But the principal periodicals of his day were even more important in creating the climate of opinion in which he wrote.¹⁶ The archaeology and wide fame of such monuments as Stonehenge,¹⁷ the pyramids,¹⁸ and the temples at Carnac and Luxor;¹⁹ the interest in sudden catastrophes overtaking unsuspecting people (especially those of Pompeii and Herculaneum);²⁰ the rise and fall of ambitious men like Napoleon²¹ or Osymandyas;²² and judgment or doom pronounced on eras or civilizations²³--these were featured throughout his reading.²⁴ In his English

9 Nathaniel Hawthorne, Selected Tales and Sketches, ed. Hyatt H. Waggoner, N.Y. (Rinehart Classics), [1950], p. 107.

10 See "L", p. 17.

11 See Marion L. Kesselring, op. cit. During 1827 and 1829, the following work in 3 vols. left the Salem Athenaeum for the Hawthorne home: Collections, Topographical, Historical, and Biographical, relating to New Hampshire, Concord, N.H., 1822-1824. The work was edited by John Farmer.

12 See Jane Lundblad, Nathaniel Hawthorne and the Tradition of Gothic Romance, Upsala and Cambridge, [Mass.], [1946], p. 21.

13 Compare Hawthorne's Fanshawe and the two Oberons.

14 See H. Arlin Turner, "Hawthorne's Literary Borrowings," P M L A, LI (1936), 543-562, esp. p. 556.

15 See Manning Hawthorne, "Nathaniel Hawthorne Prepares for College," N E Q, XI (1938), pp. 66-88, esp. pp. 82 and 84.

16 For his reading in the Quarterly Review, the Edinburgh Review, the Gentleman's Magazine and others, see Marion L. Kesselring, op. cit., p. 43 et passim.

17 See Quarterly Review, V, 120; VI, 440ff.

18 See Edinburgh Review, VI, 128; XLI, 49; Quarterly Review, XVII, 166ff.; XIX, 195ff., 394ff.; XXVII, 231ff.; XLIII, 113ff. See esp. John Barrow and [Henry] Salt, "Belzoni's Operations and Discoveries in Egypt," Quarterly Review, XXIV (1820-1821), 139-169; Francis Jeffrey, "Denon's Travels in Egypt," Edinburgh Review, I (1802-1803), 330-345. (The last was in Hawthorne's home on Oct. 28, 1826).

19 See Francis Jeffrey, loc. cit. and "The Ruins of Ancient Thebes," Christian Examiner, II (1825), 429-432 (in Hawthorne's home, Aug. 27, 1827). See also "Sketches of India--Scenes in Egypt and Italy," Edinburgh Review, XLI (1824-1825), 31-54.

20 See Edinburgh Review, VII, 466; VIII, 266; XI, 189; XVI, 381; XLVIII, 355; Quarterly Review, LIII, 129; see esp. "Herculanensia," Quarterly Review, III (1810), 1-20 (Hawthorne borrowed this volume on June 20, 1829).

21 See esp. J. W. Croker, "Buonaparte," Quarterly Review, XIV (1815-1816), 54-96 (Hawthorne borrowed this volume on July 24, 1829); "Napoleon Bonaparte," Christian Examiner, V (1828), 135-153. (This article deals with the passion for power as Napoleon's ruling principle. Hawthorne borrowed the volume on January 19, 1830). See also Edinburgh Review, XXIII, 4ff.

22 On Aug. 3, 1829, Hawthorne borrowed Quarterly Review, XVI (1816-1817), the first article in which was "Leigh's Journey in Egypt and Nubia," dealing with the Statue of Osymandyas and the testimony of Diodorus Siculus. (Shelley's poem, "Ozymandias," seems to have been influenced by this article and published a year later by Leigh Hunt in The Examiner for 1818. See James A. Notopoulos, "Shelley's 'Ozymandias' Once Again," M L R, XLVIII (1953), 442-443.) For Hawthorne's reading of Shelley, see Robert Cantwell, op. cit., p. 116.

23 See Edinburgh Review, LVI, 230ff. See also Charles Butler, A Connected Series of Notes on the Chief Revolutions of the Principal States which composed the Empire of Charlemagne, from his Coronation in 814, to its Dissolution in 1806, London, 1807 (in Hawthorne's home, Apr. 17, 1827).

24 The theme of ambition is illustrated throughout the early volumes of the Gentleman's Magazine: See II, 644, 1019; III, 345, 588; IV, 596; VIII, 257; IX, 72, 80; X, 67; XII, 475ff.; XXVII, 262, etc. See also The European Magazine and London Review, XLII (1802), XLIV (1803), and LV (1809), passim. The

Note-Books, under Nov. 12, 1857, upon visiting Westminster Abbey, he wrote: "The marble keeps merely a cold and sad memory of a man who would else be forgotten. No man who needs a monument ever ought to have one."

There is, of course, more than donnée in the story of "The Ambitious Guest." Hawthorne's peculiar signature is also present.²⁵ In the preface to The American Notebooks, Randall Stewart²⁶ discusses at length "the most important single type of character in Hawthorne's works"--the scholar-idealist--traced from Fanshawe through Dimmesdale, and including the guest whom Hawthorne described as "of a proud, yet gentle spirit--haughty and reserved among the rich and great; but ever ready to stoop his head to the lowly cottage door.... He had travelled far and alone; his whole life, indeed, had been a solitary path; for, with the lofty caution of his nature, he had kept himself apart from those who might otherwise have been his companions.... But this evening a prophetic sympathy impelled the refined and educated youth to pour out his heart before the simple mountaineers.... The secret of the young man's character was a high and abstracted ambition." He was a "high-browed" and "high-souled youth" with a "dream of Earthly Immortality."²⁷ Robert Cantwell better than any other biographer reveals how this description reflects Hawthorne's observations of his fellow students at Bowdoin during the college years and onward. The fame of many of his promising and competitive classmates, like that of the "guest," was brief, his most brilliant contemporaries ending in disaster, dying either as undergraduates or soon after receiving their diplomas, and often before entering upon their careers. Gorham Deane, for example, died of consumption on August 11, 1825, on the eve of Commencement. Zenas Caldwell, Ned Preble and Josiah Little were others whose promise was early eclipsed, and Hawthorne's early novel of college life, Fanshawe, deals with them.²⁸ Members of his own family, moreover, throughout several generations, had experienced the same frustrated hopes, either through disease, tyranny, or perils of the sea.²⁹ Such seasoners of Hawthorne's youth deepened his sense of fatalism and Nemesis, expressed even before he entered Bowdoin in such scraps of verse as:³⁰

Oh earthly pomp is but a dream
And like a meteor's short-lived gleam....

And all the sons of glory soon
Will rest beneath the mouldering stone.

Such speculation, I believe, largely explains the character of the "guest" and accounts for what has been regarded as an evident lack of ambition in Hawthorne himself both at college and afterwards. We learn that he was too diffident to compete for literary honors, and too indifferent regularly to attend scheduled classes.³¹ For a dozen years after graduation, despite Horatio Bridge's constant encouragement and despite the high quality of some of the published stories, Hawthorne remained content with anonymity.³² He even resented his family's thinking highly of his talents or imagining that he had a constancy of purpose.³³ He wished to avoid the goals that his classmates and contemporaries so eagerly pursued.³⁴ When, in 1834, at the age of thirty, he was about to send off "The Ambitious Guest" to the New England Magazine, he confessed that his works all had the pale tint of flowers blooming in too retired a shade.³⁵ It is little wonder that the theme of isolation of the individual from his fellows is recurrent in his

index should be consulted under: Ambition, Fatal Eruption, Catastrophes Lamentable, Earthquakes, Fires Remarkable, Mortality, Accidents Remarkable, Pride, etc.

25 See Leslie A. Fiedler, "Archetype and Signature: A Study of the Relationship between Biography and Poetry," Sewanee Review, LX (1952), 253-273, esp. p. 262. The signature is "the sum-total of individualizing factors in a work, the sign of the Persona or Personality, through which an Archetype is rendered, and which itself tends to become a subject as well as a means of the poem. Literature, properly speaking, can be said to come into existence at the moment a Signature is imposed upon the Archetype. The purely archetypal, without signature-elements, is the Myth."

26 See pp. xliv-xlv.

27 Selected Tales and Sketches, ed. Waggoner, pp. 101, 105, 107.

28 See Cantwell, op. cit., pp. 66, 92-93, 100-102, 119; Philip E. Burnham, "Hawthorne's Fanshawe and Bowdoin College," Essex Institute Historical Collections, LXXX (1944), 131-138.

29 See Manning Hawthorne, "Hawthorne's Early Years," Essex Institute Historical Collections, LXXIV (1938), 1-21, esp. pp. 9 and 15.

30 Cantwell, op. cit., p. 49.

31 Ibid., pp. 91, 88-89.

32 Ibid., pp. 77-78, 135, 123.

33 Ibid., p. 97.

34 Ibid., pp. 98-99.

35 Ibid., p. 135.

fiction.³⁶ He was concerned about it in himself and seemingly, in the hope of dealing with it, borrowed from the Salem Athenaeum on June 4, 1828, Chandler Robbins' Remarks on the Disorders of Literary Men.³⁷ He continued to see warnings on both sides of the vocational dilemma--both the active life and the contemplative--and it is ironic and significant that both the ambitious guest and the Willey family have enjoyed a more enduring immortality through his sympathetic story than by any monuments they might have sought. With a kind of negative or reverse ambition, therefore, Hawthorne himself was surprisingly like the stranger in withdrawing from the paths of men and avoiding amorous entanglements.³⁸

Besides revealing the donnée and the signature, Hawthorne's story reveals his interest in the archetypal³⁹ themes of necessity, free will, sin, judgment, consequences of isolation or hybris, and especially what theologians call the "problem of evil" or the "problem of pain." The Book of Job, one of the richest expositions of these mysteries, moved him almost to tears,⁴⁰ and he was, doubtless, well acquainted with such New Testament echoes as the following from Luke's gospel: "There were present at that season some that told [Jesus] of the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, Nay: but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."⁴¹ Godwin's St. Leon, mentioned above, illustrated these themes, as did Increase Mather's Essay for the Recording of Illustrious Providences...especially in New-England, which Hawthorne probably read in August, 1827, a year after the "remarkable" Willey catastrophe. Certainly he gave it his attention in July, 1829, and in March, 1834,⁴² while at work on "The Ambitious Guest." (Chapter 10 dealt with remarkable tempests, hurricanes, whirlwinds, prodigious floods, earthquakes and "land wonderfully removed.") Henry Colman's Sermons on Various Subjects (Boston, 1820), which was circulated in the Hawthorne family in January, 1827,⁴³ contained two discourses on archetypal themes that would have interested Nathaniel: Sermon XII, with a running title, "Estimation of Ourselves," had for its text Romans 12:13--"For I say...to every man...not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think." And Sermon XXI, "The Uncertainty of Life," began with Job 7:8--"The eye of him that hath seen me shall see me no more: thine eyes are upon me, and I am not."⁴⁴ Hawthorne's reading in old magazines also gave him appropriate commentary in the allegorical language which he usually sought in Spenser and Bunyan. For example, in May, 1830, he read:⁴⁵

He next shewed me the tower of Ambition, built on the top of a very high hill. "Thither, said he, you behold multitudes climbing from different quarters, struggling who shall get foremost, and pushing down those before them. On one side of it, is a steep and slippery precipice, from which the most part, after having with infinite toil and contention gained it, tumble headlong into a bottomless gulf, and

36 See Hawthorne's The American Notebooks, ed. Randall Stewart, New Haven, [1932], pp. lxviii-lxix.

37 Chandler Robbins, Remarks on the Disorders of Literary Men, or An Inquiry into the means of preventing the evils usually incident to sedentary and studious habits, Boston, 1825. See Marion L. Kesselring, op. cit., pp. 23 and 59.

38 Though the grandmother in the story may have been suggested by the news reports, her portrayal in the family setting seems to reflect Hawthorne's vivid memories from childhood.

39 See Leslie A. Fiedler, loc. cit., pp. 261-262. He defines the archetype in literary art as "the immemorial patterns of response to the human situation in its most permanent aspects: death, love, the biological family, the relationship with the Unknown etc., whether those patterns be considered to reside in the Jungian Collective Unconscious or the Platonic world of Ideas. The archetypal belongs to the infra- or meta-personal, to what Freudians call the Id or the Unconscious; that is, it belongs to the Community at its deepest, pre-conscious levels of acceptance."

40 See Austin Warren, "Hawthorne's Reading," NEQ, VIII (1935), 480-497, esp. 493-494: "Throughout his mature years, Hawthorne was a diligent reader of the Bible; and when his publisher would question, in proof-sheets, the use of a word, he would almost always cite Scripture as his authority. 'It was a great pleasure,' Fields recalled, 'to hear him talk about the Book of Job, and his voice would be tremulous with feeling, as he sometimes quoted a touching passage from the New Testament.'"

41 Luke 13:1-5.

42 See Marion L. Kesselring, op. cit., p. 56.

43 Ibid., pp. 17 and 47.

44 The entire chapter is an excellent commentary on Hawthorne's story.

45 See "The Temple of Virtue, a Dream," published by James Fordyce, Gentleman's Magazine, XXVII (1757), pp. 261-265; esp. p. 262.

are never heard of more. On the other side, is a secret path, which grows broader by degrees. At the entrance of which stands Corruption. The path, after winding up the hill, leads down again by a straight descent, till it terminates in the Dungeon of Infamy.

On May 4, 1831, he had in his hands a volume of The European Magazine, which featured Aurelius' essay on "Ambition," of which the mottoes and a few significant paragraphs follow:⁴⁶

Saepius ventis agitur ingens
Pinus; et celsce graviore casu
Decidant turres; feriuntque summos
Fulmina montes.

Horat. Lib. ii. Od. 10.

When high in air the pine ascends,
To ev'ry ruder blast it bends:
The palace from its tow'ring height
Falls tumbling down with heavier weight:
And when from Heav'n the lightning flies,
It blasts the hills which proudest rise. FRANCIS.

There is scarcely any passion of the human mind more general, or more powerful, than Ambition. Few there are who do not, upon some circumstance or other, found an opinion, that Providence never designed them to be classed indiscriminately with the common herd of mankind. The blindness of parental affection, or the adulation of fawning hypocrisy, exaggerates ordinary talents into supernatural endowments, and is perpetually meeting with certain indications of future greatness: and that admiration is not unfrequently paid to the excessive bounty of nature which is really due either to accident, or to the artifices of the nurse. Besides, there is a vanity in the human heart, which will always receive with eagerness the grossest falsehoods of flattery, and which will indeed of itself, without the aid of a sycophant, magnify every appearance of excellence, and draw a veil over every failing.

The persuasion that we are possessed of some innate superiority, and that nothing is wanting to our advancement but our own endeavours, alleviates the toil of exertion, and animates the drowsiness of sloth. The youth, who studies the page of biography, attends with pleasure those who have distinguished themselves in the republic of letters, from the trivial incidents of childhood, through the more important adventures of maturity, to the temple of Fame. The disadvantages under which they laboured in their early years he compares to the difficulties which he has to encounter, and the eminence to which they at length attained fills him with a faint hope of hereafter obtaining similar distinction, and of being enrolled in the list of those whose memory is transmitted to posterity. The fearless pupil of Mars traces with eagerness the manoeuvres of daring art, and the triumphs of victorious warriors, and pants with the desire of distinguishing himself by the same noble achievements. And the tradesman consoles himself under the heaviness of continual drudgery, by recounting the lives of those whom prudence and persevering industry have exalted, and by anticipating the importance of wealth and the pomp of magistracy.

. . .

There is another point of view which tends to strip power of all its gaudy trappings, and to exhibit it in its native simplicity. In a few years, at most, the authority of the tyrant will be at an end, and he himself will, in common with the meanest peasant, be mingled with the dust, and will be removed to a state of existence in which the distinctions of earthly pride will no longer be regarded, and he will, in his turn, be summoned to appear before the sovereign Ruler of the Universe.

An ambitious spirit, when once indulged, for the most part bursts the shackles of prudence, and proceeds to the most dangerous extremities. Both ancient and modern history furnish us with numerous instances of men whose desires have at first been moderate, but who, spurred on by ambition, and encouraged by success in their former undertakings, have at length stepped forward too far to recede, and have fallen victims to this unbridled passion.

Juvenal, in his tenth satire, animadverting, with his wonted energy, on the vanity of human wishes, makes particular mention of the fate of Sejanus, as a remarkable instance of the folly of Ambition. Sejanus had, at first, no other wish than that of insinuating himself into the favour of the Emperor Tiberius; not satisfied with the smiles and the confidence of his sovereign, his next study was to secure to himself the attachment of the soldiers and the Senate; having succeeded thus far, his last daring effort was to declare himself the Emperor of Rome, and Tiberius merely a dependant Prince. The spirit of the Roman people could not brook so gross an insult; the aspiring courtier was immediately hurried down from the pinnacle of power; the obsequious deference which had before been paid to his authority was now exchanged for those reproaches which are always offered to degraded pride; and his life was soon sacrificed to the injured honour of his sovereign and his country.

. . .

But there is certainly no object to which our ambition can be directed with greater honour, or advantage, than that of surpassing others, not in the abundance of wealth, or the vain pride of titular distinctions, but in the innocence of our lives and the purity of our hearts. He whose exertions are en-

⁴⁶ See Marion L. Kesselring, op. cit., pp. 32 and 50, and The European Magazine and London Review, XLII (1802), pp. 346-349.

played in this way, does not fear the malevolence of a rival, or the inconstancy of a patron; he does not look forward to death as the limit of every scheme of happiness that he has formed, but as the joyful expiration of the term of his probation, and the introduction to scenes of eternal felicity, where he shall be no longer harassed with the doubts, or beset with the temptations, of humanity. Instead of struggling with the violence of the waves, in the tempestuous ocean of life, he is placed on a rock, where he is secured from every danger, and smiles at the fury of the storm. It is the peculiar property of this ambition, that its spirit will not evaporate with the transient day which gives it birth, but will be protracted with increasing vigour to the close of our existence; that in the pursuit it will be always attended with pleasure, and in the event assuredly crowned with success.⁴⁷

Few ever lived to be more thoroughly convinced of the vanity and instability of earthly power than Wolsey. "If I had but served my Maker," exclaimed the dying Cardinal, "as diligently as I have served my Sovereign, He would not have forsaken me in my grey hairs." It must, indeed, have been a painful task for him in his last moments, to reflect, that his life had been wholly spent in vain; that all his exertions had terminated, not in the tranquillity and veneration which old age expects, nor in the internal satisfaction and confidence which religion affords, but in persecution, abhorrence, and remorse; that he had employed himself in courting favour and soliciting dignities which he had since lost, and which indeed, if they were continued to him, could now no longer be of any avail; and that he had entirely neglected the service of Him who could alone support him in death, or befriend him in eternity. Had the See of Rome, and all the honours which his fondest wishes had ever embraced, been offered to him at this juncture, he would no doubt have spurned them with the disdain of one taught by experience, that he who consults his own happiness should not set his affections on the baubles of this world, which are unsatisfactory in their nature, and fleeting in their duration, but should aspire to that glory which cannot be affected by the vicissitudes of time; the anticipation of which is sufficient here, but the enjoyment of which will be superlative hereafter.

Always interested in appropriate symbols for his archetypal stories, Hawthorne wrote in the autumn of 1832, after climbing Mr. Washington and visiting the site of the Willey tragedy, that he had witnessed "one of those symbolic scenes which lead the mind to the sentiment, though not to the conception, of Omnipotence."⁴⁸ When, therefore, in 1834, Bulwer-Lytton's Last Days of Pompeii was published in New York, analogous in many respects to the Willey episode, he determined to celebrate an American "happening," the behavior of an American "Vesuvius," and the fate of those who, like the citizens of ancient Herculaneum, had pursued their tasks below in unjustified confidence. Hawthorne's reading in Mather and in old periodicals had already suggested to him that cosmic forces were at work behind New-England catastrophes. Now Bulwer-Lytton, drawing upon recent archaeological discoveries at Pompeii, successfully portrayed scenes of domestic life of Roman householders and their futile attempts to escape the wrath of an erupting mountain and a sequent tidal wave. Encouraged thereby to join his knowledge of Yankee home life and Bowdoin students to the external details of the Willey story, Hawthorne achieved a thoroughly American masterpiece on the same great theme which was employed a century later in Thornton Wilder's The Bridge of San Luis Rey.

In accordance with his artistic purpose, he interestingly modified the details of the press despatches to heighten character and increase the reader's interest. For example, Polly, Mrs. Willey's name in the newspaper accounts, was changed to Esther, a Biblical appellation of which Hawthorne seems to have been fond and which, perhaps, he intended to be more typical of New England Christian matrons than "Polly." "Esther," moreover, had noble and heroic connotations, appropriate for a wise mother who expresses no inordinate ambition at the circle about the hearth. Since the oldest child, a daughter named Eliza Ann, was only twelve, Hawthorne added five years to her age to make her attractive to the guest and thereby slightly complicated his simple plot. (She alone was able to draw from the stranger a number of observations---not heard by the others in the group, but important for the reader. Perhaps Hawthorne got his hint for her from the maiden in the Nancy legend.) Hawthorne seems to have created the character of the grandmother largely out of the hempen homespun of his own rich memory. That venerable lady supplied some delightful realism for his tale (she "wiped a chair with her apron," asked for a looking-glass, etc.) and climaxed the wishing session with shroud-and-coffin imagery which intensified the foreshadowing just before the slide silenced all talk.

47 Compare the girl's reply to the ambitious guest: "It is better to sit here by this fire...and be comfortable and contented, though nobody thinks about us."

48 See Elizabeth Lathrop Chandler, op. cit., p. 16, for a discussion of the tales reflecting this period of interest in New-Hampshire themes and settings.

In order to heighten the reader's sense of tragedy, Hawthorne, in the conversation of his characters, demonstrated the respectability and worth of all--from the guest down to the charming boy who wished for a midnight ride to the Flume. (He but dramatized the esteem expressed in the newspaper accounts: "In the household of the Notch [the guest] found warmth and simplicity of feeling, the pervading intelligence of New England, and a poetry of native growth." "It was one of those primitive taverns where the traveller pays only for food and lodging, but meets with a homely kindness beyond all price.")

Some changes Hawthorne designed better to motivate his story and develop a situation in which significance might attend an encounter with pain and destruction. Whereas the slides actually descended from Mt. Washington between eleven o'clock and midnight, after all or most of the Willey household had retired to bed, Hawthorne's fireside group received the stranger at about 7:30 or 8 P.M.--at the children's bedtime--so that ample conversation might prepare the reader for the tragedy. The press accounts do not sound a note of "judgment" except in Upham's letter ("L"). Some talk of a mysterious Providence appears in reports "E" and "F". Hawthorne alone hints of hybris and Nemesis.

A third group of changes was intended to further unity through simplification and emphasis on effect. Hawthorne omitted all the unpleasant details of the press accounts as well as the original interment of the five recovered corpses near the Notch house, with reinterment later in Conway. He merely concluded, in terse irony: "Their bodies were never found." He, therefore, had no need to mention the Willey dog, who actually survived the slides to help the rescue teams. He also omitted the two hired men, since their presence might have disturbed the intimacy and candidness of the family group about the fire. He had nothing to say of the traveller Barker, who arrived at the Notch on the morning after the tragedy to spend a day in the deserted house before carrying news to Crawford's. Instead, Hawthorne mentioned only the "light smoke stealing from the cottage chimney up the mountain side"---a signal to rescuers but chiefly a symbol of life extinguished. He also ignored the details of the heavy rains which, in the press, accounted for the loosened debris of the avalanches. He substituted normal, strong winds to justify the warm fire upon the hearth, to create an eerie atmosphere without and within, to personify Mt. Washington or the "mountain spirits", and to assist his foreshadowing by intensifying pathetic fallacy. We are told that the Notch is "the bleakest spot of all New England" and that the wind is "sharp throughout the year."⁴⁹ Most important, from his vantage ground of omniscient observer, Hawthorne discarded the realism of the reported external facts in favor of the "inside story" after the example of Bulwer-Lytton. Perhaps in self-protection he made two further changes in order to distinguish his tale from the traditional reports: He omitted the name of Willey and changed the date of the catastrophe from August 28 to "one September night." (Members of the Willey family were still alive and might have objected to his treating the victims fictively.) As for the date, the reports did not reach the newspapers until September.

Hawthorne employed a number of literary devices to create tone, effect and archetypal significance. Sufficiently patent are the skilful condensation; the almost excessive foreshadowing, the verbal suggestiveness ("fate," "fated," "prophetic," and "peal of the last trump"); the personification of the mountain,⁵⁰ and the rich imagery---kinesthetic, tactual, auditory and visual.⁵¹ Most significant is his employment of irony, both explicit and implicit. The former needs little comment beyond a few examples: "Were I to vanish from the earth tomorrow, none would know so much of me as you." (The dead know nothing!!) "But I cannot die till I have achieved my destiny." (He did achieve it. Like John Marcher in James' "The Beast in the Jungle" he was one to whom nothing was to happen!!) "Then let Death come! I shall have built my monument." (He did not build it. The tremendous landslide was a contribution!!) "[The young man] could have borne to live an undistinguished life, but not to be forgotten in the grave."

49 See The American Notebooks, ed. Randall Stewart, p. 283, for Hawthorne's letter to his mother of Sept. 16, 1832, after climbing Mt. Washington: "The other particulars, how I climbed three miles into the air, and how it snowed all the way, and how, when I got up the mountain on one side, the wind carried me a great distance off my feet and almost blew me down the other, and how the thermometer stood at twelve degrees below the freezing point, I shall have time enough to tell you when I return."

50 I cite three instances: "...something like a heavy footstep was heard without, rushing down the steep side of the mountain." "The old mountain has thrown a stone at us, for fear we should forget him." "He sometimes nods his head and threatens to come down." See page 19 above.

51 Note the references to "cold," "sharp," "rattling," "lamentation," "bellows," "monument," "pedestal," "funeral," etc.

(No one today cares about him, and where is his grave?) "Besides we have a sure place of refuge hard by if he [the mountain] should be coming in good earnest." (The house was the surest refuge, Cf. also Psalm 46:1)⁵² The implicit irony is also rich. The Willeys might have been saved if they had heeded the child and set out for the Flume. (Cf. Matthew 18:3ff.--"Except ye...become as little children....") "Their bodies were never found." (Cf. Psalm 78:40--"For He considered that they were but flesh, and that they were even as wind that passeth away, and cometh not again.") The very title implies irony. Ambitio, "going about canvassing" suggests busy campaigning for Roman votes--a visiting of many houses. The guest would have done well to stay in one house and to have married the maiden. No surviving ballot, moreover, suggests that he was a candidate for office!⁵³

Hawthorne also maintained tone through the use of literary allusions, two of which are notable extensions of the irony. The family in the Notch had found, he says, the "herb, heart's-ease"--the pansy (viola tricolor) or the fragile, variegated violet--which had caused much confusion and emotional complication in Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream (II.i.169ff.):

Fetch me that flower; the herb I show'd thee once:
The juice of it on sleeping eyelids laid
Will make a man or woman madly dote
Upon the next live creature that it sees.

Heart's-ease had, it seems, prepared the Willeys for the dangerous philosophy of their guest! In literature, the flower suggests inscrutableness, insecurity, and insubstantiality⁵⁴--not inappropriate in describing the "Happiness" (capitalized in the tale) of those at the Willey fireside. The second allusion--a reference to New-Hampshire and White-Mountain folklore--is in the remark of the doomed youth when he heard the wind wailing through the Notch "as if a funeral were passing.... It seemed like the choral strain of the spirits of the blast, who in old Indian times had their dwelling among these mountains, and made their heights and recesses a sacred region."⁵⁵ Belknap, in his widely read History, writing on "Monuments and relicts of the Indians," suggested that the old superstition continued to exist:⁵⁶

I wish it could not be said, that some of their superstitious notions have been transferred and propagated. The idea that lonely mountains and rocks are inhabited by departed spirits, and other invisible and imaginary beings, is not yet worn out.... These notions, however pitied by some, and ridiculed by others, are still deeply engraven on the minds of many, and are maintained with an inflexibility which would do them honor if the cause were worthy of defence. So strong are these impressions, that the same persons, whose intrepidity in scenes of real danger is unquestionable, often render themselves miserable by the apprehension of evils, which exist only in their imagination.

Hawthorne's implication is apparent. Perhaps these spirits do still exist and, like furies, avenge themselves on those who encroach upon their high territory or even encamp in the foothills, ambitious to be "as gods, knowing good and evil" (Genesis 3:5). Continuing his account, Belknap assists the student of Hawthorne to connect the ambition of the guest with that of the seekers in "The Great Carbuncle":⁵⁷

The Indians gave them [the White Mountains] the name of Agiocochook: They had a very ancient tradition that their country was once drowned, with all its inhabitants, except one Powaw and his wife, who, foreseeing the flood, fled to these mountains, where they were preserved, and that from them the country was re-peopled. They had a superstitious veneration for the summit, as the habitation of invisible beings; they never ventured to ascend it, and always endeavoured to dissuade every one from the attempt. From them, and the captives, whom they sometimes led to Canada, through the passes of these mountains, many fictions have been propagated, which have given rise to marvellous and incredible stories; particularly, it has been reported, that at immense and inaccessible heights, there have been seen carbuncles, which are supposed to appear luminous in the night.

52 Cf. Psalm 46:7, 11; 57:1; 59:16; 62:7-8; 71:7; 91:2, 9; 94:22; 142:5; Proverbs 14:26; Isaiah 28:15; Jeremiah 16:19.

53 See E. Cobham Brewer, Dictionary of Phrase and Fable, Phila. and London, n.d., p. 41: "In Rome it was customary, some time before an election came on, for candidates to go round to the different dwellings to solicit votes, and those who did so were ambitious of office."

54 See "Pansy" in Hoyt's New Cyclopedia of Practical Quotations, comp. Kate Louise Roberts, N.Y. and London, [1940], pp. 577ff.; E. Cobham Brewer, op. cit., p. 592; Funk and Wagnalls Standard Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology and Legend, ed. Maria Leach, (2 vols.), N.Y., [1950], II, 843-844.

55 Selected Tales and Sketches, ed. Waggoner, p. 105.

56 See Jeremy Belknap, The History of New-Hampshire, (2nd ed., 3 vols.), Boston, 1813, III, pp. 71-72.

57 Ibid., III, 31. See accounts "I" and "J" supra.

APPENDIX

[Reproduction of the important article in the *Boston Courier*, Sept. 9, 1826, p. 2.]**BOSTON COURIER.**JOSEPH T. BUCKINGHAM,
Editor and Proprietor.TERMS. Daily Paper, EIGHT DOLLARS a
year; Country Paper, twice a week, FOUR DOL-
LARS; JUNE, three times a week, FIVE DOLLARS
—published in advance.**Boston.**

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 1826.

MORE OF THE WHITE MOUNTAINS. The New-Hampshire Intelligencer, published at Haverhill, received yesterday morning, contains a number of additional particulars relating to the late melancholy disaster. As the subject has excited universal sympathy, we believe that an abstract of the account in the Haverhill paper will not be unacceptable to our readers.

A party of gentlemen from New-York had been on a visit to the White Mountains and returned through Haverhill, and furnished the editor of the Intelligencer with a statement, agreeing in all the principal incidents with those we have before published. In addition, Col. P. Carrigan, who came from the scene of desolation, gave the following account.

The distressing reports from the White Mountains, which have for some days past excited so much fear and solicitude, are confirmed in their most melancholy details.

The whole Willey family, with two hired men, making nine in number, perished by an avalanche, which slid from the west side of the Gap of the White Mountains, on the night of the 28th ult. Samuel Willey, jun. and his wife Polly, both aged about 30; Eliza Ann, 12; Jeremiah, 12; Martha, 10; Eldridge Gerry, 8; Sally, 5; David Allen, hired man, 40; David Nicholson, do. 20.

Mr. Ethan A. Crawford, the Notch guide to Mount Washington, though extremely anxious for the fate of the Willey family, was detained at home in consequence of the destruction of his own property on Tuesday, and did not get to the Notch House until Wednesday morning. He found the barn adjoining, partly destroyed, and two horses killed in it; but the house was uninjured, although a slide had passed close below it, and another had miraculously stopped within three feet of the rear.

Every appearance of the house indicated that the family had fled from it in the night, in the moment of alarm. Their clothes were on the floor nigh the beds where they had lain down for the last time to sleep.

Mr. Crawford had, however, some faint hopes that they might have escaped, and gone down to his father's, who keeps a public house six miles below. The arrival of his brother to the fatal spot, removed every shadow of a doubt on the subject.

The next day, several hundreds of people assembled, and the bodies of Mr. and Mrs. Willey and Mr. Allen were found, about fifty rods from the house, in the meadow, amid drift wood, naked, bruised and disfigured. The body of Mr. Willey was found about thirty feet from those of Mrs. Willey and Mr. Allen. One of the hands of Mr. Allen was clutched round a small tree. None of the other bodies had been found as late as the 3d inst. The searchers were directed to the spot where the bodies were found, partly by the flies, and the scent of two hounds.

Mr. Crawford, the father of Ethan A. says, that the rain fell in torrents, and heavier than was ever known in that part of the country, and ceased at his house (8 miles from Willey's) about 11 o'clock at night.

The Willey family had probably after the rain had ceased, retired to rest, but awakened and alarmed by the crash of the barn, they rushed out of doors, and while flying for the Camp,* (which Mr. Willey, after the slide of the 26th June last, had built as a place of refuge,) in the extreme darkness they ran directly into one of the avalanches, and were swept into the flood below, to instant destruction.

Mr. Willey was a worthy man, and Mrs. Willey an amiable and comely woman. They both were from respectable families in Conway, where they are to be re-interred.

To those who know the Pass, it may be observed that, as you descend the Notch, the first great slide is about thirty rods to the north of the famous cascade called the *Flood Brook*—from thence to 100 rods below the Willey house, are from 50 to 100, varying in width from 500 to 800 feet. The magnitude of the rocks thrown down, and whirled about, and the whole desolation is horrible beyond description.

With the paper from which the preceding account was taken, we received a letter from Mr. Good, the editor, written after the paper was put to press, and containing some more details. Mr. G. says—

"A number of my neighbors started from this place on Friday morning last for the White Hills, for the purpose of beholding the work of devastation which the late slides or avalanches have made. It is, say they, impossible to describe what they have seen. To begin. You will picture to yourself from one to one hundred and fifty of these slides coming down from the top of the mountain, some fifty, some 100, and from fifty to eight hundred feet in width, and extending from three to five miles, carrying trees, huge stones, &c. with the velocity of lightning. Poor Mr. Willey and his family have met with a most melancholy fate. Had they but staid in their house, they would have been safe, as that, with a few feet of land in front, was the only place of refuge which was left them, yet they sought for a more safe one, and perished. One of these slides came down in the rear of Mr. W.'s house, within three feet, and there stopped, piled up about 100 feet high, with large logs, stones, trees, dirt, &c. Another stopped in front of the house, after taking the shed, barn, &c. in its way. To this slide it is supposed that Mr. Willey and family perished, as they were found about fifty rods from the house, among the timber of the burn. Mr. W. when found, had both of his legs and both arms broken, and was otherwise bruised. His wife was most horribly mangled—nearly half her head, from the forehead to the back part, was gone, literally torn off! and there she lay, naked, with her brains scattered around, a most hideous spectacle. The hired man was also much bruised. I am this evening informed that the entrails of one of the children have also been found. About 300 people are constantly employed in search of the bodies—it is however supposed that the bodies of the children were carried by the water into the river. The water rose in the river, about 16 miles from the Notch, 5 feet an hour, and was 25 feet higher than is usual. It is impossible to make or clear out the road again. Some of the stones that came from the mountain are as large as some two-story dwelling houses, and piled on top of each other for miles. It will take a man nearly a day to walk from Mr. E. A. Crawford's to the scene of desolation. If any person ever had a desire to see the White Mountains, they could now be well paid for their trouble. People are daily passing for that purpose.

Richard Bartlett, Sec'y. of State, and Mr. J. D. Moore, were at Crawford's when this rain commenced, or rather they had started the Sunday afternoon previous for the Mountain. (Mount Washington) and had got as far as the Camp, where they staid all night. In the morning it began to rain in torrents, and the water ran through the Camp like a river. They barely escaped to Crawford's with their lives. The streams they had to cross in going back were so much swollen that they had to cut down trees to cross on—and in crossing the Amonoosuck they came very near being drowned; as the tree on which they crossed sank about 3 feet below the surface, and they had to sit astride, nearly under water, to hold on to keep themselves from going down with the current. They had not left the Camp many minutes before it was swept away by the current, and there are now gullies, where the Camp stood, from 60 to 80 feet deep.

Papers and letters from other parts of New-Hampshire and Maine contain the same or similar details. The incident of the slide is of an unprecedented nature that it excites general inquiry and its melancholy effect has produced a universal sympathy.

It is not our practice to re-publish in our paper what we have written for and published in another; and we depart from our customary rule on this occasion, at the request of two or three gentlemen, who visited the White Mountains few weeks since, by inserting the following extract from a journal published in the *Galaxy of August* :

On the morning of the 17th, from a public house kept in Conway, N. H. by Mr. M. Millan, we pursued our journey to the White Mountains, in an open wagon, with one companion beside the driver. By travelling in this open vehicle, a much better view was obtained of the rude and romantic scenery than if we had taken the stage-coach. The road follows, generally, the windings of Saco river to its source above the Notch, and crosses it several times. Through the town of Conway, and for several miles above, in Bartlett, and an unincorporated tract, called Hart's Location, there are considerable intervals on the banks of the river; but as the road ascends, the mountains on either side gradually approximate nearer to each other, till there is barely space enough for a road. About 12 miles above

Mr. Millan's is a tavern, kept by Obed Hall, better known in these regions as Judge Hall, a gentleman who was once a representative in Congress. Six or seven miles above Judge Hall's, the traveller reaches the house of Mr. Crawford, senior. We stopped here but just long enough to give our horses water, and a few breathing moments. The vale between the mountains is here extremely narrow, and the Saco, being above the confluence of any considerable tributary, is a mere brook.

After leaving the cultivated grounds of Mr. Crawford, contiguous to his house, the road and the river wind through a deep and narrow glen, six miles before another human habitation is discerned; and, except the road, there is scarcely an indication in all this distance, that the physical power of a human being has ever been exercised. At the conclusion of this six miles, the eye is greeted with the appearance of a small but comfortable dwelling house, owned and occupied by a Mr. Willey, who has taken advantage of a small, a very small interval,—where the bases of the two mountains seemed to have paused and receded, as if afraid of coming in contact and amalgamating into one impassable pile,—to erect his lone habitation. Rude and uninviting as the spot appears, he has contrived to gather around it the necessaries, if not the conveniences of life. We observed a large flock of sheep in one of his enclosures; other domestic animals in the barn-yard and several flocks of ducks and geese in the little meadow which fronted the house. We were furnished with a dinner of ham, eggs, and the usual accompaniments to such a meal in a country tavern. The interior of the house exhibited a neatness that might well become some inn that we have seen of more frequent resort, and the faces of parents and children were the pictures of content. Can philosophy or conjecture account for or explain the motives that can induce a man thus to plant himself at a distance of six miles from the habitation of any of his race, and in a spot where it is next to impossible he can ever have a nearer neighbor?

From hence to the Notch of the White Mountains the distance is about two miles. The sublime and awful grandeur of this passage baffles all description. Geometry may settle the heights of the mountains, and numerical figures may record the measure, but no words can tell the emotions of the soul, as it looks upward and views the almost perpendicular precipices which line the narrow space between them; while the senses ache with terror and astonishment, as one sees himself hedged in from all the world besides. He may cast his eye forward or backward or to either side—he can see only upward, and there the diminutive circle of his vision is cribbed and confined by the battlements of Nature's cloud-capt towers, which seem as if they wanted only the breathing of a zephyr or the wafting of a straw against them, to displace them, and crush the prisoner in their fall. Just before our visit to this place,—on the 26th of June,—there was a tremendous avalanche, or slide, as it is there called, from the mountain which makes the southern wall of the passage. An immense mass of earth and rock from the side of the mountain was loosened from its resting place and began to slide towards the bottom. In its course it divided into three portions, each coming down with amazing velocity into the road, and sweeping before it shrubs, trees and rocks, and filling up the road beyond all possibility of its being recovered. With great labor, a path-way has been made over those fallow masses, which admits the passage of a carriage. The place from which this slide or slip was loosened, is directly in the rear of Mr. Willey's house; and were there not a special Providence in the fall of a sparrow, and had not the finger of that Providence traced the direction of the sliding mass, neither he, nor any soul of his family, would ever have told the tale. They heard the noise when it first began to

move, and ran to the door. In terror and amazement, they beheld the mountain in motion. But what can human power effect in such an emergency? Before they could think of retreating, or ascertain which way to escape, the danger was past. One portion of the avalanche crossed the road about ten rods from their habitation. The second a few rods beyond that; and the third and much the largest portion took a still more oblique direction. The whole area now covered by this slide, Mr. Willey estimates to be nearly an acre, and the distance of its present bed from its former place on the side of the mountain, and which it moved over in a few minutes, he thinks is from three quarters of a mile to a mile. There are many trees of large size, that came down with such force as to shiver them in pieces; and innumerable rocks of many tons weight; any one of which was sufficient to carry with it destruction to any of the labors of man. The spot on the mountain, from which the slip was loosened is now a naked white rock; and its pathway downward is indicated by deep channels or furrows grooved in the side of the mountain, and down one of which poured a stream of water sufficient to carry a common saw-mill.

From this place to the Notch, there is almost a continual ascent, generally gradual, but sometimes steep and sudden. The narrow path-way proceeds along the stream, sometimes crossing it and shifting from the side of one mountain to the other, as either furnishes a less precarious foot-hold for the traveler than its fellow. Occasionally it winds up the side of the steep to such a height as to leave on one hand or the other, a gulf of unseen depth; for the foliage of the trees and shrubs is impervious to the sight. The Notch itself is formed by a sudden projection of rock from the mountain on the right or northerly side, rising perpendicularly to a great height, (probably 70 or 80 feet) and by a large mass of rock on the left side, which has tumbled from its ancient location, and taken a position within twenty feet of its opposite neighbor. The length of this Notch is not more than three or four rods. The moment it is passed the mountains seem to have vanished. A level meadow overgrown with long grass and wild flowers, and spotted with tufts of shrubbery, spreads itself before the astonished eye, on the left; and a swamp or thicket on the right conceals the ridge of mountains which extend to the north. The road separates this thicket from the meadow. Not far from the Notch, on the right hand side of the road, several springs issue from the rocks that form the base of the mountain, unite in the thicket, and form the Saco river. This little stream runs across the road into the meadow, where it almost loses itself in its meandering among the bogs; but again collects its waters and games wader the rock that makes the southerly wall of the Notch. It is here invisible for several rods, and its presence is only indicated by its noise as it rolls through its rugged tunnel. In wet seasons and freshets, probably a portion of the water passes over the fragments of rocks which are here wedged together, and form an arch or covering for the natural bed of the stream.

The sensations which affect the corporeal faculties, as one views these stupendous creations of Omnipotence, are absolutely afflicting and painful. If you look at the summits of the mountains, when a cloud passes towards them, it is impossible for the eye to distinguish at such a height, which is in motion, the mountain or the cloud, and this deception of vision produces a dizziness, which few spectators have nerve enough to endure for many minutes. If the eye be fixed on the crags and masses of rock that project from the sides of the mountains, the flesh involuntarily quivers, and the limbs seem to be impelled to retreat from a scene that threatens impending destruction. If the thoughts which crowd upon the intellectual faculties are less painful than these sensations of flesh and blood, they are not sublime to be described. The frequent alterations and the great changes that have manifested upon place in these majestic masses since they were first piled together by the hand of the Creator, are calculated to awaken "thoughts beyond the reaches of the soul." If the "everlasting hills" show break in pieces and shake the shaggy covering of their sides, who will deny that

This earthly globe, the creature of a day,
Fleeth built by God's right hand, shall pass away;

The Sun himself, by gathering clouds oppress,
Shall, in his silent, dark pavilion, rest;
His golden urn shall break, and useless lie
Amongst the conning ruins of the sky—
The stars rush headlong in the wild confusion,
And bottle their glittering firebrands in the sun.
—But perform upon the truth:—no stage.

Of his own works his dreadful part alone.
Earth quakes at his approach; her hollow womb
Conceives thunders through a thousand deep
And fiery caverns, rous'd beneath his foot.
The hills move lightly, and the mountains smoke,
Not he has touched them.
The rocks fall headlong and the valleys rise.
What solid was, by transformation strange,
Flows fluid; and the fixed and rooted earth,
Torn into billows, heaves and swells,
Or, with vertiginous and hideous whirl
Hucks down its prey insatiable. Immense
The tumult, and the overthrow, the pangs
And agonies of human and of brute
Multitudes, fugitive on every side,
And fugitive in vain.

Reflection needs not the authority of inspiration to warrant a belief that this delineation is something more than poetical. History and Philosophy teach its truth, or, at least, its probability. The melancholy imaginings which it excites are relieved by the conviction that the whole of God's creation is nothing less

Than a capacious reservoir of means.

Formed for his use and ready at his will; and that if this globe should be resolved into chaos, it will undergo a new organization, and be remoulded into scenes of beauty and abodes of happiness. Such may be the order of nature to be unfolded in a perpetual series of material production and decay, of creation and dissolution—a magnificent procession of worlds and systems—in the march of eternity.

After passing by the meadow mentioned above, the road proceeds through a forest of evergreens, maples, mountain-ash, &c. four miles to the house of Mr. Crawford, jun. This is the resort of all visitors to Mount Washington, and is the only human habitation, after leaving Mr. Willey's, already mentioned, for the space of twelve miles. Here we remained several days, from Monday afternoon to Friday morning. When we arrived, the summit of Mount Washington was enveloped in thick clouds, and did not show itself till Wednesday, although the horizon in every other direction was clear. The summit of this mountain is nine miles from Crawford's. One mile of this distance is on the road to the Notch, which is thus far retraced, by those who visit the mountain. The path then leaves the road and crosses a pasture. It then enters a wilderness, in some places overgrown with high grass and raspberry bushes, and incumbered with stumps and half-burnt logs and trees; in others, where it has not been overrun by fire, the trees are large, enclosing entirely the rays of the sun, and there is little or no underbrush to accommodate the pedestrian. After travelling more than six miles, with Mr. Crawford for a guide, and crossing one branch of the Ammonoosuck river on a log, and another branch several times by stepping from stone to stone, we reached The Camp. This is a hut made of bark, erected by Mr. Crawford for a resting place, and furnished with a bed of the small twigs of the fir, which is very grateful to the limbs of one who has travelled thither from his house; and no other kind of approach is practicable. He keeps here a few blankets, the materials for kindling a fire, and the necessary vessels for making tea. The course usually adopted by visitors, is, to leave his house in the afternoon, pass the night at the Camp, and complete the excursion the next day. Circumstances rendered it necessary for us to perform the whole in one day. We started at six from Mr. Crawford's house, and arrived at the Camp about half past eight, A.M. After half an hour's rest and refreshment, we proceeded in the ascent, which is exceedingly fatiguing. The ascent, after leaving the Camp is steep and not acquired without great exertion. In many places the roots of trees which cross the path, form a kind of stair, which assists the progress. A mile or more below the summit, the region of vegetation ceases; or if any thing grows above this boundary, it is the Dwarf-willow, not more than three inches

in height, and a few stunted spruces, that spring from the rocks like sentinels. The appearance of these trees, if trees they may be called, is truly fearful. The trunks of some of them are quite large, perhaps eight, ten, or twelve inches in circumference, some of them more than two feet high, and all of them dead at the top—the spine of the trunk rising a few inches above the living branches, but perfectly dead and dry.

The prospect from the top of Mount Washington is grand and extensive. In a clear day, the eye takes in a circuit of at least one hundred miles. When we were there, the atmosphere was smoky and the prospect much circumscribed. Little else could be distinguished than the peaks of other mountains, which resembled islands rising from the sea. The thickness of the air obscured all other objects. A mile below the summit, the house and barn of Mr. Crawford were visible, and appeared shrunk to the diminutive size of a tea-bowl basket. Descending by the path we ascended, we reached Crawford's about five o'clock, having been absent eleven hours.

Mr. Crawford intends to make a carriage road from his house to the Camp, which will greatly lessen the fatigue of ascending the mountain. To assist him in this project, a subscription is opened in a book kept at his house, and about \$200 subscribed. When this road is completed which will be in the course of another summer, we know not why the Notch and Mount Washington should not be attractive to those who travel for amusement, or health. To the lovers of the wild and wonderful operations of Nature, these scenes furnish unspeakable gratification; and if he is a son of New-England, they will not be less admirable because they are a portion of his native woods and mountains. New-England—

There is no other land like thee,

No dearer shore;

Thou art the shelter of the free;

The home, the port of Liberty,

Thou hast born, and shalt ever be,

Till Time is o'er.

Ere I forget to think upon

My native land, shall mother curse the son

She bore.

Thou art the firm unshaken rock,

On which we rest;

And, rising from thy hardy stock,

Thy sons the tyrant's frown shall mock,

And Slavery's galling chains shall reject.

And free the oppressed;

Ah, who the wreath of Freedom twine,

Beneath the shadow of thy vine

Are bloused.

We love thy rude and rocky shore,

And here we stand—

To die for home—leaning on heaven

Our head.

Columbian Centinel,

Boston, Sept. 9, 1826.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE

Centinel.

LAST Night from the press published,

Is a letter from the Rev. CARLOS WILSON,

Minister, (N. Y.) 24 Sept. 1826.

DEAR SIR—I have just returned from an excursion to the White Mountains, and shall now spend a day of rest in this village, by giving you some account of the effects produced by the most destructive fall of rain ever known in that region. It happened on the night of the 28th of August, which will be long remembered in this part of the country.

I left Manchester on Saturday last, in company with two gentlemen of my acquaintance from the city of New-York, and rode as far as Haverhill, where we all spent the Sabbath. The road over which we passed was like a bed of ashes (two or three inches deep); and the country around us exhibited the usual effects of a long drought. The abundant rains, that fell three weeks ago,

over the Southern half of New-England, did not reach the upper part of the valley of Connecticut River. On Monday morning it began to rain at Haverhill, and continued along our route for most of the day, but so moderately and at such intervals, that with the help of great coats and umbrellas we proceeded on our journey in an open wagon as far as Bethlehem, fifteen miles West of the White Mountains. As we approached the vicinity of the Mountains, the rain increased till it became a storm, and compelled us to stop about the middle of the afternoon.

The storm continued most of the night; but the next morning was clear and serene. The view from the hill of Bethlehem was extensive and delightful. In the Eastern horizon Mount Washington, with the neighboring peaks on the North and on the South, formed a grand outline far up in the blue sky. Two or three small fleecy clouds rested on its side, a little below its summit, while from behind this highest point of land in the United States East of the Mississippi, the sun rolled up rejoicing in his strength and glory. We started off toward the object of our journey, with spirits greatly exhilarated by the beauty and grandeur of our prospect. As we hastened forward with our eyes fixed on the tops of the Mountains before us, little did we think of the scene of destruction around their base, on which the sun was now for the first time beginning to shine. In about half an hour we entered Bretton Woods, an unincorporated tract of land covered with a primitive forest, extending on our road five miles to Rosebrook's Inn, and thence six miles to Crawford's, the establishment begun by Rosebrook's father, as described in the *Travels of Dr. Dwight*. On entering this wilderness we were struck with its universal stillness. From every leaf in its immense masses of foliage the rain hung in large glittering drops; and the silver note of a single unseen and unknown bird was the only sound that we could hear. After we had proceeded a mile or two the roaring of the Amonosuck began to break in upon the stillness, and soon grew so loud as to excite our surprise. In consequence of coming to the river almost at right angles, and by a very narrow road, through trees and bushes very thick, we had no view of the water, till with a quick trot we had advanced upon the bridge too far to recede, when the sight that opened at once to the right hand and to the left, drew from all of us similar exclamations of astonishment and terror; and we hurried over the trembling fabric as fast as possible. After finding ourselves safe on the other side, we walked down to the brink; and, though familiar with mountain scenery, we all confessed that we had never seen a mountain torrent before. The water was as thick with earth as it could be, without being changed into mud. A man living near in a log hut showed us how high it was at day break. Though it had fallen six feet, he assured us that it was still ten feet above its ordinary level. To this add its ordinary depth of three or four feet, and here at day break was a body of water twenty feet deep, and sixty feet wide, moving with the rapidity of a gale of wind between steep banks covered with hemlocks and pines, and over a bed of large rocks, breaking its surface into billows like those of the ocean. After gazing a few moments on this sublime sight, we proceeded on our way, for the most part at some distance from the river, till we came to the farm of Rosebrook, lying on its banks. We found his fields covered with water, and sand, and flood wood. His fences and bridges were all swept away; and the road was so blocked up with logs, that we had to wait for the labors of men and oxen, before we could get to his house. Here we were told that the river was never before known to bring down any considerable quantity of earth, and were point-

ed to bare spots on the side of the White Mountains, never seen till that morning. As our road, for the remaining six miles, lay quite near the river and crossed many small tributary streams, we employed a man to accompany us with an axe. We were frequently obliged to remove trees from the road, to fill excavations, to mend and make bridges, or contrive to get our horses and wagon along separately. After toiling in this manner for half a day, we reached the end of our journey, not however without being obliged to leave our wagon half a mile behind. In many places, in these six miles, the road and the whole adjacent woods, as it appeared from the marks on the trees, had been overflowed to the depth of ten feet. In one place the river, in consequence of some obstruction at a remarkable fall, had been twenty feet higher than it was when we passed. We stopped to view the fall, which Dr. Dwight calls "beautiful." He says of it—"The descent is from fifty to sixty feet, cut through a mass of stratified granite; the sides of which appear as if they had been laid by a mason in a variety of fantastical forms; betraying, however, by their rude and wild aspect, the masterly hand of nature." This description is sufficiently correct; but the beauty of the fall was now lost in its sublimity. You have only to imagine the whole body of the Amonosuck, as it appeared at the bridge which we crossed, now compressed to half of its width, and sent downward at an angle of 20 or 25 degrees, between perpendicular walls of stone. On our arrival at Crawford's the appearance of his farm was like that of Rosebrook's, only much worse. Some of his sheep and cattle were lost; and eight hundred bushels of oats were destroyed. Here we found five gentlemen, who gave us an interesting account of their unsuccessful attempt to ascend Mount Washington the preceding day. They went to the "Camp" at the foot of the mountain on Sabbath evening, and lodged there with the intention of climbing the summit the next morning. But in the morning the mountains were enveloped in thick clouds; the rain began to fall, and increased till afternoon, when it came down in torrents. At five o'clock they proposed to spend another night at the camp, and let their guide return home for a fresh supply of provisions for the next day. But the impossibility of keeping a fire where every thing was so wet, and at length the advice of their guide, made them all conclude to return, though with great reluctance. No time was now to be lost, for they had seven miles to travel on foot, and six of them by a rugged path through a gloomy forest. They ran as fast as their circumstances would permit; but the dark evergreens around them, and the black clouds above, made it night before they had gone half of the way. The rain poured down faster every moment; and the little streams, which they had stepped across the evening before, must now be crossed by wading, or by cutting down trees for bridges, to which they were obliged to cling for life. In this way they reached the bridge over the Amonosuck near Crawford's just in time to pass it before it was carried down the current. On Wednesday, the weather being clear and beautiful, and the waters having subsided, six gentlemen, with a guide, went to Mount Washington, and one accompanied Mr. Crawford to the "Notch," from which nothing had yet been heard. We met again at evening, and related to each other what we had seen. The party who went to the Mountain were five hours in reaching the site of the camp, instead of three, the usual time. The path for nearly one-third of the distance was so much excavated, or covered with miry sand, or

after about the same manner, that the progress was very slow. The trees, which had been wholly swept away; and the soil of the Notch, by which it had stood, being more than ten rods wide, and with banks here and there fifteen feet high. Four or five other brooks were passed, whose beds were enlarged, some of them to twice the extent of this. In several the water was now only three or four feet wide, while the bed of ten, fifteen, or twenty rods in width, was covered six miles with stones from two to five feet in diameter, that had been rolled down the mountains, and through the forests, by thousands, bearing every thing before them. Not a tree, nor the root of a tree, remained in their path. Immense piles of hemlocks and other trees, with their limbs and bark entirely bruised off, were lodged all the way on both sides, as they had been driven in among the standing and half standing trees on the banks. While the party were climbing the Mountain, thirty "slides" were counted, some of which began near the line where the soil and vegetation terminate, and growing wider as they descended, were estimated to contain more than a hundred acres. These were all on the western side of the mountains. They were composed of the whole surface of the earth, with all its growth of woods, and its loose rocks, to the depth of 15, 20, and 30 feet. And wherever the slides of two projecting mountains met, forming a vast ravine, the depth was still greater.

Such was the report which the party from the mountains gave. The intelligence which Mr. Crawford, and the gentleman accompanying him, brought from the Notch, was of a more melancholy nature. The road, though a turnpike, was in such a state, that they were obliged to walk to the Notch House, lately kept by Mr. Willey, a distance of six miles. All the bridges over the Amonosuck, five in number, those over the Saco, and those over the tributary streams of both, were gone. In some places the road was excavated to the depth of 15 and 20 feet; and in others it was covered with earth, and rocks, and trees, to as great a height. In the Notch, and along the deep defile below it, for a mile and a half, to the Notch House, and as far as could be seen beyond it, no appearance of the road, except in one place for two or three rods, could be discovered. The steep sides of the mountains, first on one hand, then on the other, and then on both, had slid down into this narrow passage, and formed a continued mass from one end to the other, so that a turnpike will probably not be made through it again very soon if ever. The Notch House was found uninjured; though the barn adjoining it by a shed was crushed, and under its ruins were two dead horses. The house was entirely deserted; the beds were tumbled; their covering was turned down; and near them upon chairs and on the floor lay the wearing apparel of the several members of the family; while the money and papers of Mr. Willey were lying in his open bar. From these circumstances it seemed almost certain, that the whole family were destroyed; and it soon became quite so, by the arrival of a brother of Mr. Crawford from his father's six miles further East. From him we learnt that the valley of the Saco for many miles, presented an uninterrupted scene of desolation. The two Crawford's were the nearest neighbours of Willey. Two days had now elapsed since the storm, and nothing had been heard of his family in either direction. There was no longer any room to doubt, that they had been alarmed by the noise of the destruction around them, had sprung from their beds, and fled naked from the house, and in the utter darkness had been soon overtaken by the falling mountains and rushing

torrents. The family, which is said to have been amiable and respectable, consisted of nine persons: Mr. Willy and his wife and five young children of theirs, with a hired man and boy. After the fall of a single slide last June, they were more ready to take the alarm, though they did not consider their situation dangerous, as none had ever been known to fall there previous to this. Whether increases fall, now that

had ever been known to fall before, the same length of time, at least since the fall of the mountains were covered with a heavy growth of woods, or whether the slides were produced by the falling of such a quantity of rain so suddenly, after the earth had been rendered light and loose by the long drought, I am utterly unable to say. All I know is, that at the close of a rainy day, the clouds seemed all to come together over

the White Mountains, and at midnight discharge their contents at once, in a terrible burst of rain, which produced the effects that have now been described. Why these effects were produced now, and never before, is known only to Him, who can read the heavens when he will, and come down, and cause the mountains to flow down at his presence.

Yours, &c. CARLOS WILCOX

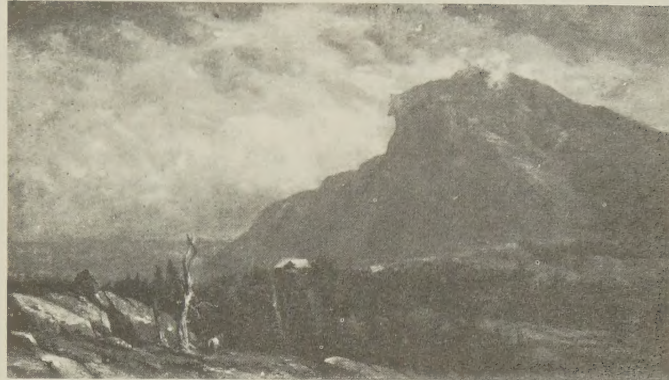
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OLD MAN OF THE MOUNTAINS

[THE PROFILE. Franconia Notch, White Mountains, New Hampshire.] Original oil painting, about 13½" x 23½", in 2½" gold frame (over all about 18½" x 28½"). Unsigned and undated but possibly about 1860 and attributed to George L. Brown (born in Boston, 1814; died in Malden, Mass., 1889), one of whose landscapes is in the Metropolitan Museum of New York. A pleasing picture of Nathaniel Hawthorne's "Great Stone Face."



